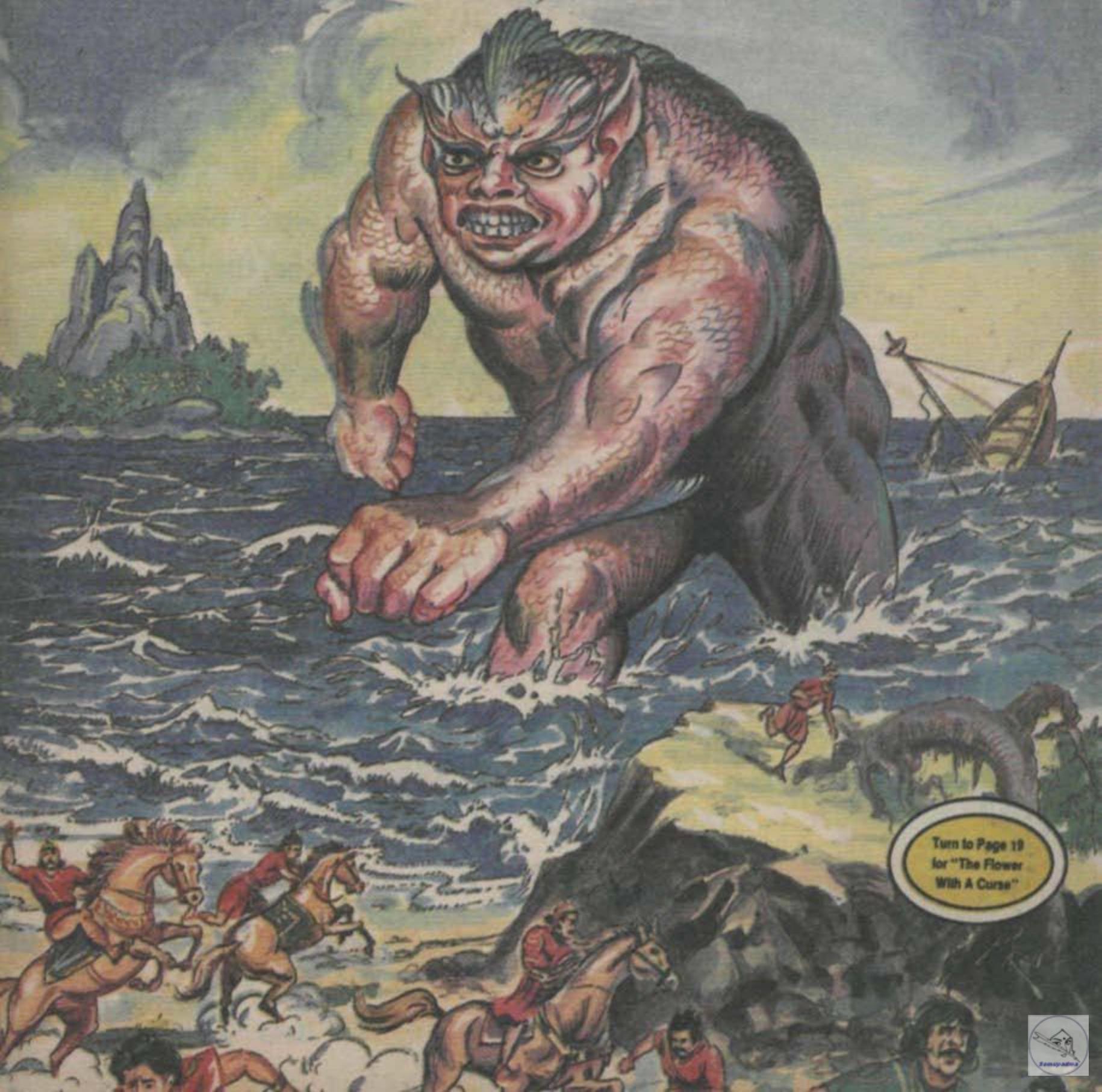


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I remember
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and girls on the block looked
like they were having
'hazaar' fun. But no, they didn't
look too interested in me.

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make them your pals? Think...Think. So
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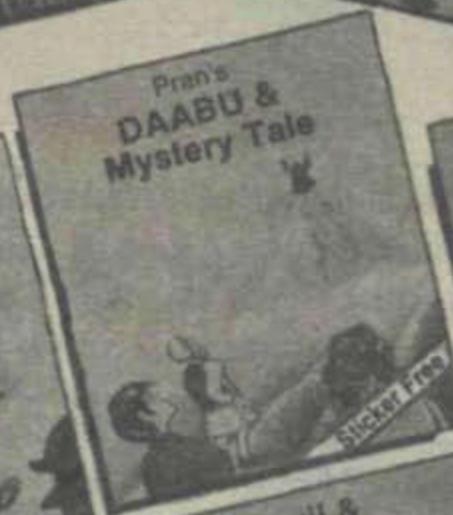
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And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!

NEXT ISSUE

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No. 1

THE FLOWER WITH A CURSE : The soldiers guarding the southern parts of Maninagar have reported the appearance of a monster from whom they have run away to save their lives. The monster mysteriously appears only at night, and presumably heads towards the north. King Pratapavarma, Raj Guru Gourinath and Commander Gambhir Singh surmise that it must be the wayward Prince Chandramani, whom the purohit of the temple of Lairembi a long time ago had cursed to turn a monster. Pratapavarma keeps his promise of visiting the tribals, when he appeals to them to save the kingdom. Whom do they choose to face the monster?

VEER HANUMAN : After the death of Mahiravana, Ravana decides to meet Rama and Lakshmana on the battlefield himself. There is no let up in the fight between the Rakshasas and the Vanara soldiers. The women of Lanka blame Ravana and his sister, Soorpanakha, for having brought disaster to Lanka. Lakshmana faints when he is hit by an arrow from Ravana.

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Controlling Editor :
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Founder :
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When parents too are friends

'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy' goes the adage. This might have been partly true in the recent months because it was the time of the inevitable annual examinations, and the parents were keen that their wards devoted more time with their books of study than in play. If they had prevented the children from going out to play even for a little while, they can be excused, can't they?

All that is past, and the children, free from their exams, are well into their holidays, relaxing with their friends or visiting their relations in another city, town, or village. They may also be catching up with their general reading and spending a good lot of time playing.

Play is a major component of what we call childhood. And, play for the smaller children will be mostly playing with their toys, while for the older children it could be both outdoor as well as indoor games. It is play and games which provide an opportunity to children to make new friends and to bind the friendship already made.

However, in these days, when children are mostly confined to tiny apartments in high rise buildings, who else can be better friends for them than their own parents? But how many parents give a thought to this proposition? An hour every day spent with their children, by joining them in their play or games, will certainly bring them closer to the young ones and give them a chance to teach the children human values and inculcate in them qualities of head and heart. During that one hour, parents are, and can be, not somebody to be afraid of. In play, all are friends.

Some food for thought—for both parents and children!



THE SEER OF KANCHI

Perhaps no other pontiff—past or present—has had such a long reign over a religious order as Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Mahaswamigal, the Sankaracharya of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, whose birth centenary celebrations lasting a year began in May 1993 in Kanchipuram, near Madras.

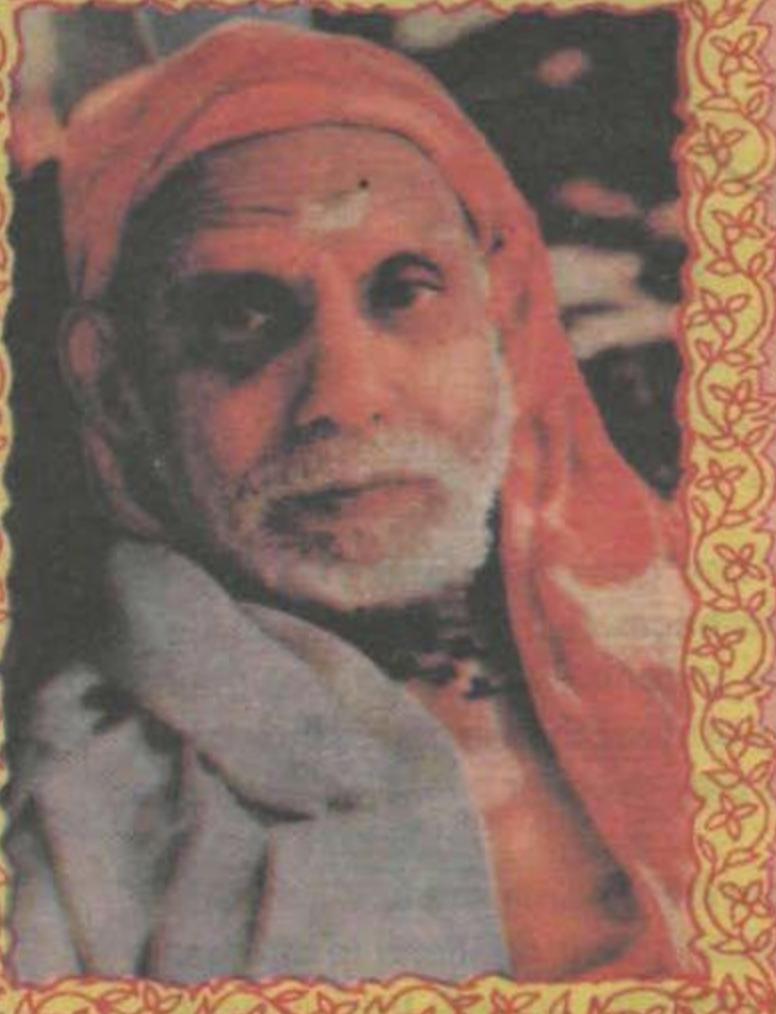
The 68th Sankaracharya in succession to Adi Sankara, the present Paramacharya was chosen to head the Kamakoti Peetam 86 years ago under dramatic circumstances. The 66th Acharya, Sri Chandrasekhara Saraswati, happened to meet a 12-year-old boy, Swaminathan, in 1906. Apart from everything else, the youngster's penetrating eyes made the

Acharya feel that the boy had the makings of a *Jagadguru* or world leader. He told the scholars attached to the Holy Seat that he would like Swaminathan to succeed him to the Peetam.

The very next year, the Acharya passed away at Kalavai, some 10 km from Kanchi. At that time, Swaminathan was in Tindivanam, where he was studying in a Christian Missionary school. His maternal cousin, who was already with the late Acharya in Kanchi, was installed as the 67th Sankaracharya. When the news reached Swaminathan and his mother, they started for Kanchi to console the lady's widowed sister, as her only son would not be able now to stay with his family any longer.

When the mother and son reached Kanchi, a *sanyasi* of the Peetam separated Swaminathan from his mother and took him to Kalavai. During the journey, it was disclosed to the boy that his cousin was seriously ill and he—Swaminathan—was, therefore, to be ordained the 68th Sankaracharya. And that meant, he would not be able to go back to his family!

He was to reminisce thus later : "I was stunned with this unexpected turn of events. I lay in a kneeling posture in the bullock-cart, shocked as I was, repeating



'Rama-Rama'—the only spiritual prayer I knew during the rest of the journey." His father's permission was secured by telegram and on February 13, 1907, Swaminathan took charge of the Kamakoti Peetam as the 68th Sankaracharya. He assumed the same name as of the 66th Acharya.

The teen-aged Acharya spent the next few years in seclusion, preparing himself for the great tasks ahead, through study and *tapasya*. It is a marvel how such a young mind could spend all day and all night in pursuit of the spiritual—a pursuit which was to confer benediction on the entire world.

For 21 years, from 1909, the Acharya toured the country on what was then called a *dig-vijaya*—in the manner of the great *dig-vijaya* of Adi Sankara himself. The Acharya made the long and difficult journey mostly on foot, riding a palanquin only when absolutely necessary. He kept up this practice till he retired from active participation in the day-to-day affairs of the Peetam a few years ago.

A scholar, the Paramacharya knows as many as 17 languages, including Latin, French, and Greek. The Queen Mother of Greece, after meeting the Acharya, remarked : "There was pure spirituality." Her daughter added : "... a meeting with Perfection." A top U.S. diplomat once called the Acharya "a Prince among ascetics".

During a long meeting between the Acharya and Gandhiji in 1927, it is said, Rajaji reminded the latter that it was nearing dinner time. To which Gandhiji replied : "The conversation I am having with the Acharya is itself my evening meal."

It is a common custom among people to celebrate one's 'Satabhishekam' when he or she turns 84 years—after having 'seen a thousand full moons'. For the Paramacharya of Kanchi, it is 'Sathabdi Mahotsava', on turning a full hundred years. In an article entitled "*What Life Has Taught Me*" the Paramacharya wrote some years ago, he said : "Life has taught me only this—'God has created some souls to live for others only'."

Thus spake Paramacharya

- *There is nothing wrong in religions having differences in principles and practices. There is no need to make them uniform. The only need is for all the religions to be united. Uniformity is not necessary; unity is essential.*
- *We cannot survive the tensions of the present day world by haphazard actions; only a disciplined approach can help us in this. Discipline is an acquired trait. The easiest way to acquire this trait is by performing our duties with the utmost care and devotion and with the least disturbance to others. This will result in our doing only good deeds, thereby making ourselves cleaner, happier.*





The Physician's Letter

Baidyanath of Bhadrapur was a famous physician. He had specialised in curing wounds, eruptions, and boils, following the native system. Naturally, his name was on everybody's lips, and people came from far and wide to consult him and seek cure for their ailments.

The king of the land suffered from a tumour on his back. He called in several doctors, but none of them was able to cure him of the tumour, which just went on enlarging, much to his discomfort and frustration. He was about to resign to his fate, taking it for granted that there was none to give him any relief, when he was told about Baidyanath.

"Not even the best doctors in this land have been able to cure my tumour," remarked the king

with a sigh. "You mean to say that a mere Vaidya will succeed where all others failed? Anyway, there's no harm in trying." He wrote a letter to Baidyanath and sent it with his soldiers.

They went to Bhadrapur and handed the king's letter to Baidyanath, who read the contents and thought for a while before he told them, "If your king has any faith in me, let him come here; I shall then treat him."

The soldiers went back and informed the king of the Vaidya's advice. The army commander was then with the king. "A mere village quack dare say such things!" he said angrily. "How audacious to make such demands of the king! I shall send my soldiers to catch him by his neck and bring him here by force. Just give me permission, Your



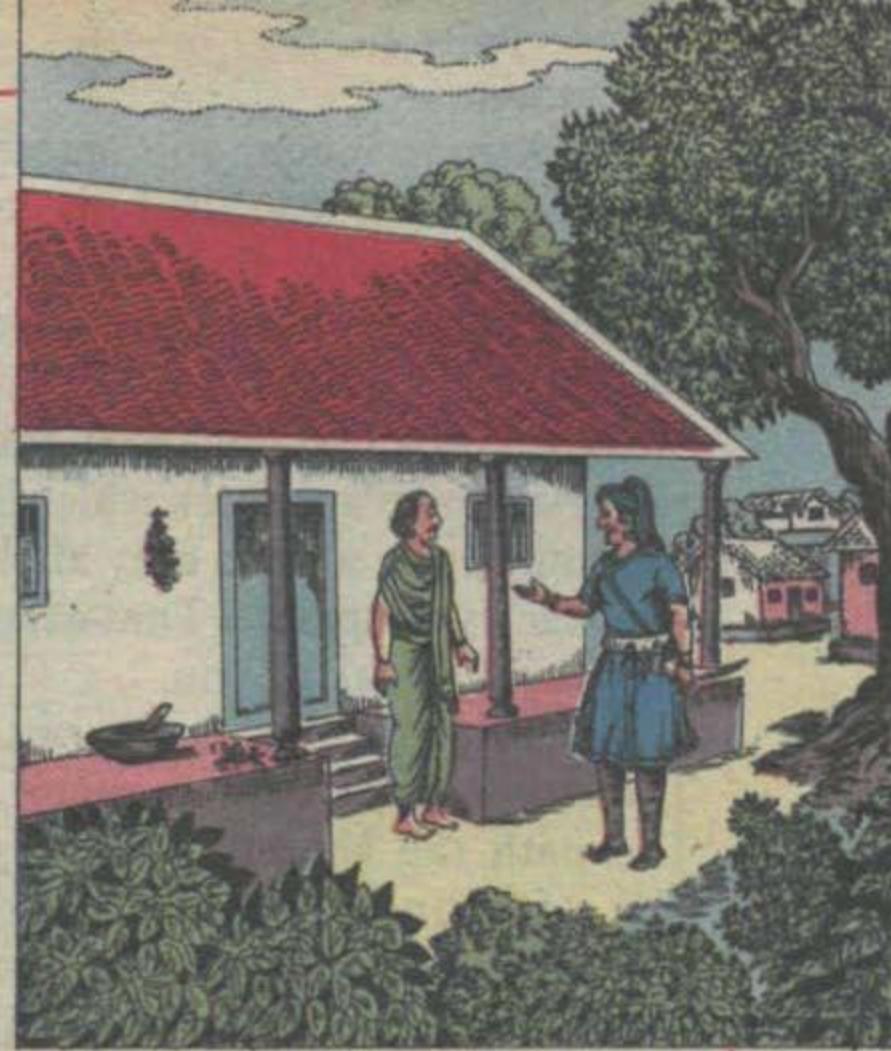
Majesty!"

"No! Don't do anything like that!" the king checked his commander. "Clever people may appear arrogant; it's just natural. I've a feeling this Baidyanath will be able to cure me. You may arrange for a palanquin."

The commander escorted the palanquin taking the king. They reached the outskirts of Bhadrapur and camped there. The next morning, the commander called on Baidyanath. "The king has arrived. Shall I bring him to your palace?" he said, half-mockingly.

"No, you need not," replied Baidyanath, "I shall come wherever he's camping." Baidyanath examined the king minutely and with great care. "Your Majesty, I can cure this tumour in two weeks. But you've to follow my directions—especially about food. In fact, I shall prepare it myself and send it to you. You shouldn't eat anything else."

The king agreed. The treatment started immediately, and day by day, the king felt better. Before the end of two weeks, the tumour had disappeared. The king did not have any pain and



felt much relieved. He was very happy. "You're a great physician, Baidyanath!" the king praised him sky-high. "You've cured me of my malady which other doctors had pronounced as incurable. Whatever fee you want, I shall give you."

"O King! I don't need any fee," said Baidyanath. "By the grace of god, I've enough wealth. However, I would like to ask you a favour. I hope you'll grant it to me."

"Whatever you ask for, I'm ready to grant it!" the king assured Baidyanath. "Don't hesi-



tate to ask."

"O King! When you came here, you had travelled by a palanquin," said Baidyanath, watching for the king's reaction. "But when you return, please go in the chariot I've got ready for you. And here's a letter which I would like you to read only after you reach your palace. That's the only favour I ask of you."

The king got into the chariot. The commander went in escort. The path the chariot took was full of stones, pebbles, and potholes. As a consequence, the chariot swayed this way and that, and the king had to suffer all the shaking. The commander was

furious. "Why this punishment after he had cured you of your pain? That man must be mad!" the commander protested to the king against the physician of Bhadrapur.

"My fellow! You haven't understood Baidyanath properly," the king pulled up the commander. "He must have some specific reasons to do so. Perhaps he has revealed all that in his letter."

As soon as they reached the palace, the king asked the commander to bring to him the village chief of Bhadrapur. "I'm afraid he has cheated us. He must have misused the money from the





treasury."

The village chief was brought before the king. "You've shown in your accounts some expenditure on the road to Bhadrapur," the king took him to task. "You haven't repaired the path at all. I've just used that road and I've seen its condition myself. I'm sure you've spent the money otherwise. I had taken you to be honest, but you've proved to be otherwise. Out with the truth!"

The village chief admitted his guilt, and the king dismissed him from service. The king then asked the commander to read the letter from Baidyanath. He had written in it : "O King! Please forgive me

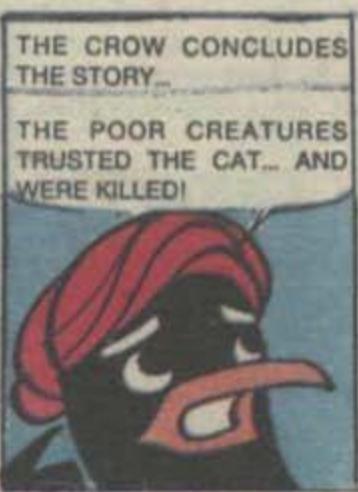
for having put you to a lot of trouble and inconvenience. I had a reason for not agreeing to come to the palace to treat you. I know how much painful you would have found it to travel by chariot along the road to the capital. The patients coming to me have been using the same path and you can now imagine the suffering they would have undergone. I hope you'll now come to their help."

"Have you now understood Baidyanath?" asked the king of the commander. "He does not live for himself. See how he cares for others!" The king ordered that the road be repaired immediately.

**Conquest pursues where courage leads the way.
He doeth well who doeth good.
No man can be wise on an empty stomach.**



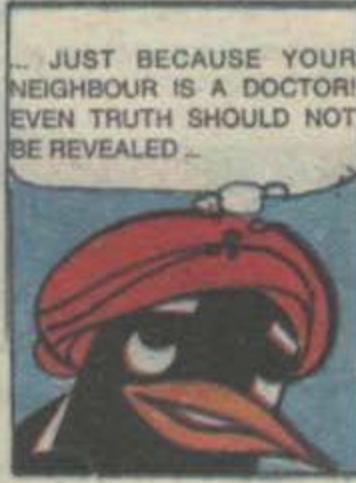
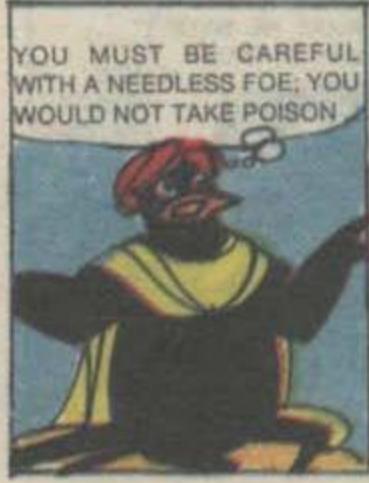
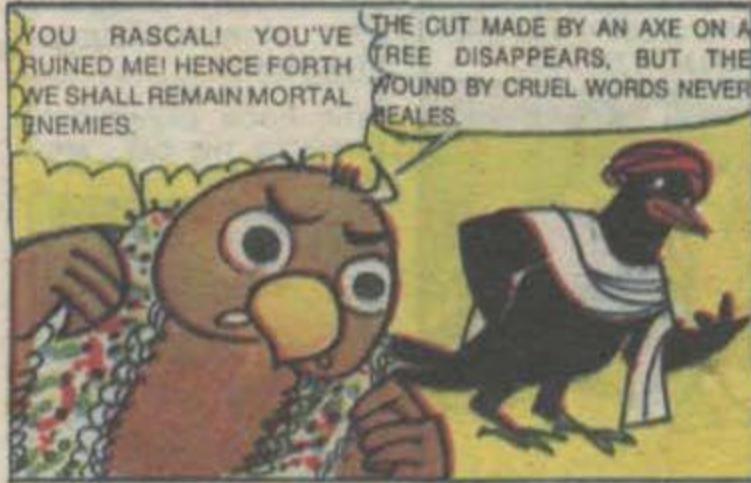
Heaven is nearer than earth to those men of purified minds who are freed from doubt.
(Thirukkural)



Let a man learn thoroughly whatever he may learn, and let his conduct be worthy of his learning.



THE BIRDS FLY AWAY
TO THEIR ABODES,
LEAVING THE OWL
WHO CANNOT GO
BECAUSE IT IS
DAYTIME.



Property gives more sorrow than poverty, to those who live under the sceptre of a king without justice.



To Continue

The method of performance for one who has begun to act is to ascertain the mind of him who knows the secret thereof.

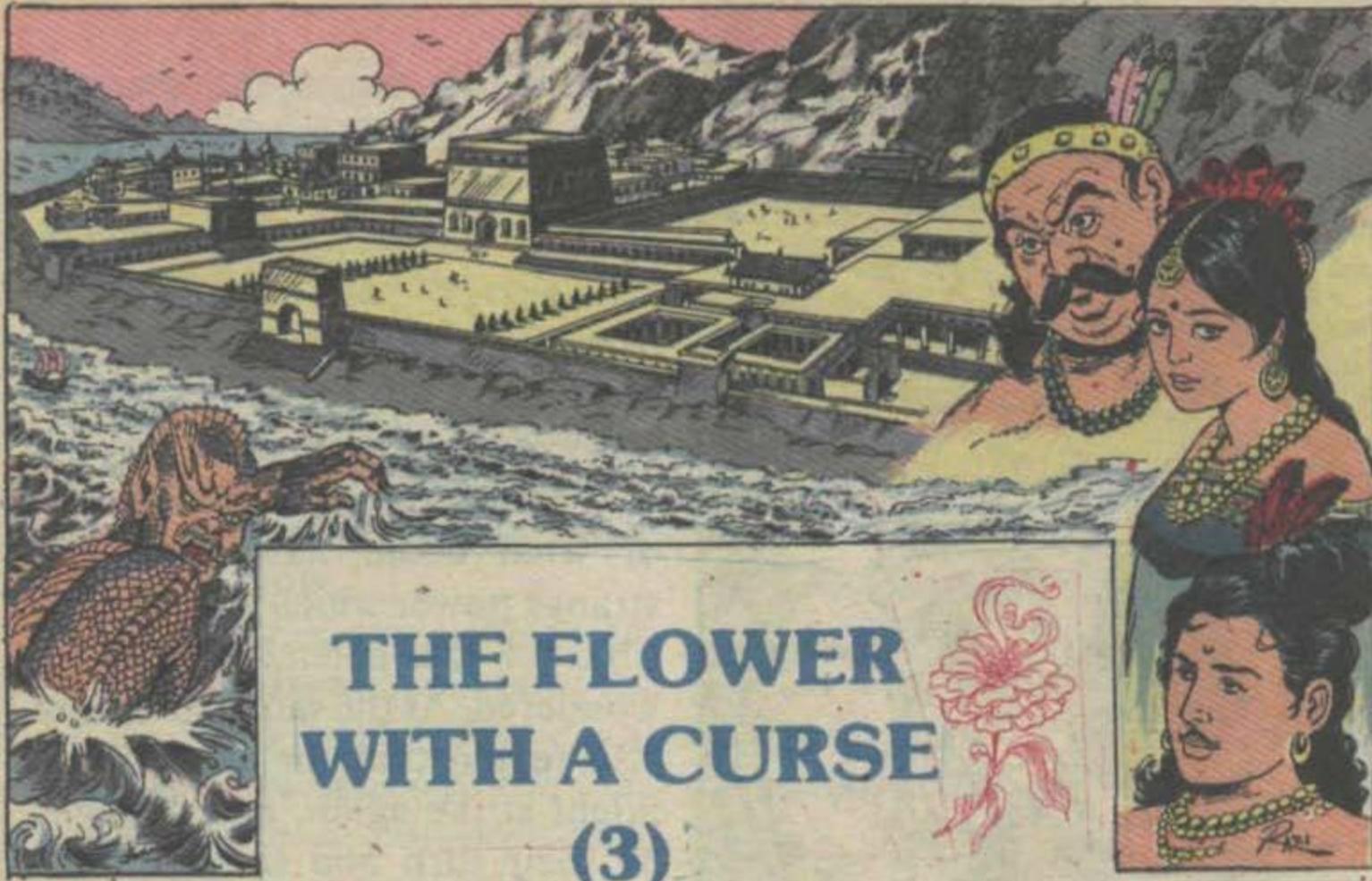


Why kill a fattened calf?

Ramanathan of Kalasipalayam, Bangalore, spent some anxious days. His friend Mekanathan was missing. True, he had not fared well in his examination and was agitated about his future. But Mekanathan could have confided in him, thought Ramanathan, and he could have advised him properly. His least expectation was, his friend would contact him from somewhere. Instead, it was Mekanathan's father who rang up, asking him to come over. Would the worried family have received some news? he wondered. However, when he reached his friend's house, he was received by Mekanathan himself! Before he was closeted with his friend, Mekanathan's father announced that they were "killing the fattened calf". In his excitement, Ramanathan did not attach much importance to the statement. The family insisted on his joining them at lunch which, he found, was a sumptuous affair, though purely vegetarian. There were no meat dishes at all. Why then was a calf mentioned at all? he wondered. The expression is taken from the parable of the Prodigal Son in the Bible (Luke XV), which tells us of the youth who repented his act and returned to his family, when he was welcomed with open arms and feted at an elaborate feast (killing a fattened calf kept for special occasions) to mark his homecoming.



What is "sky-writing"? asks Jyotiranjan Biswal, of Dhenkanal. Sometimes, a flying aircraft makes smoke-trails containing words which can be read. This method is generally adopted to convey an advertiser's message.



THE FLOWER WITH A CURSE

(3)

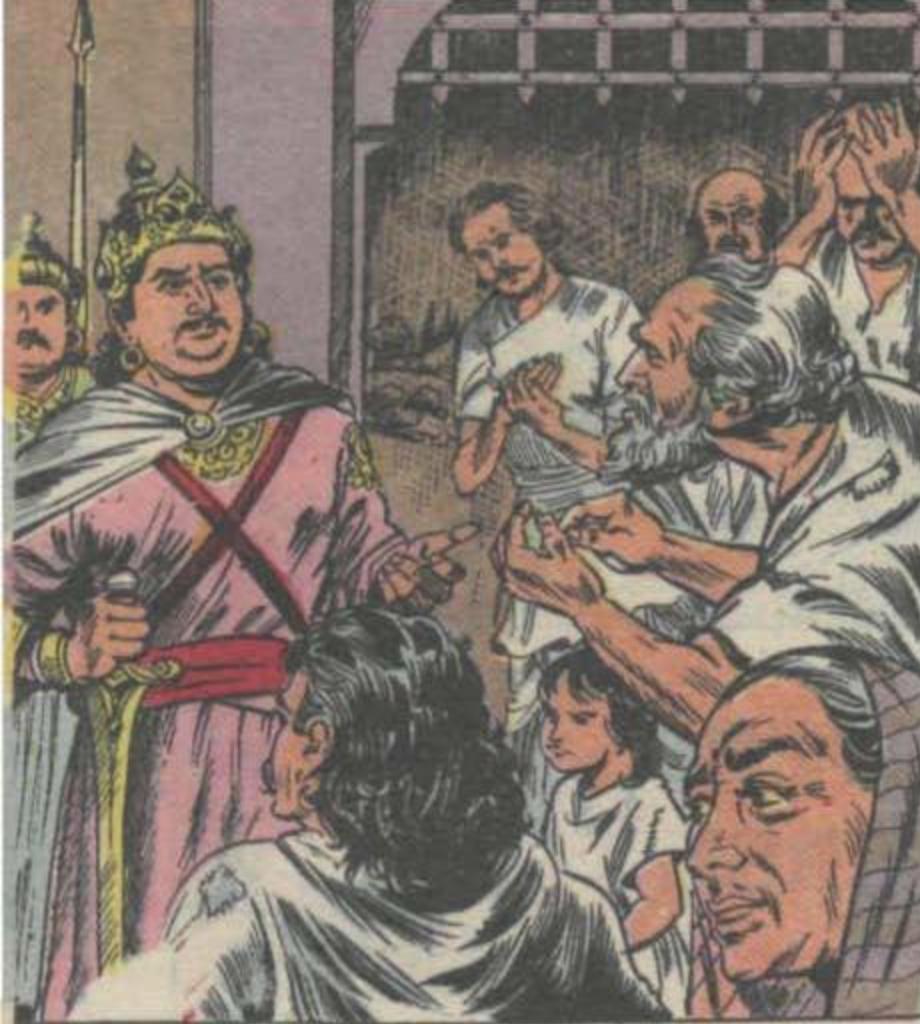


(Raj Guru Gourinath explains to King Pratapavarma of Maninagar and Princess Priyamvada how the flower 'Shatabdika' has acquired a curse and its blooming after almost a hundred years may bring harm to the kingdom. Priyamvada agrees to taking away the bunch of flowers presented to her by the tribal youth, Thangal, from her chambers to a far corner of the palace garden. Commander Gambhir Singh rushes in with the news of a calamity that has overtaken the southern parts near the sea. Villages have disappeared and the villagers nearby have run away. Some of them are heading towards the capital. Gourinath feels that his fears are not unfounded.)

The calamity that struck the village in the southern parts of Maninagar was something strange by all descriptions. Nobody knew what exactly had happened, and how. But everybody had some idea of the disaster. By piecing together whatever the villagers, who had run away to different parts of the

kingdom, could recollect, and all that the soldiers sent by Commander Gambhir Singh saw for themselves, he and later King Pratapavarma and Raj Guru Gourinath concluded that the whole thing was mysterious and defied any easy unravelling.

The villagers remembered that the previous day, nothing



extraordinary had happened. The night was quiet and peaceful and there was no indication of a storm or a cyclone. There was no rain, not even a shower or a drizzle. The sea nearby was also calm. However, the sight that greeted them when they woke up in the morning belied their experience the previous day.

Several dwellings—big and small—had been razed to the ground, with no trace of the people living there. The whole place looked desolate except for the debris of what once looked like huts and houses. Beyond the

barren area stood the sea—as calm as ever. What baffled the people was that the destruction of entire villages had happened in eerie silence—not a single moan or wailing had been heard, nor any sound of crash when the roofs of the houses came down.

Who was the mysterious killer, or what could have been the strange power which was responsible for this calamity? they all wondered. At the same time, they also feared that the silent killer might strike again, and it might be their turn and that of their houses. That was why they decided to leave the place for safer parts of the kingdom.

They grabbed whatever they thought was most precious to them and gathered outside their villages to begin a long trek, without having any idea where they would or could go. One thing they were definite about; they should go as far away from the seacoast as possible. They went in different directions, and it was the group that headed towards the capital which brought the first news of the calamity.

At the outskirts of the capital,



they were halted by the soldiers guarding the entry points, and word was sent to the Commander, who directed his men to let the villagers enter the capital and to guide them to the public places. He then rushed to the palace to inform the king of the calamity and the exodus, and to get his advice as to what more should be done.

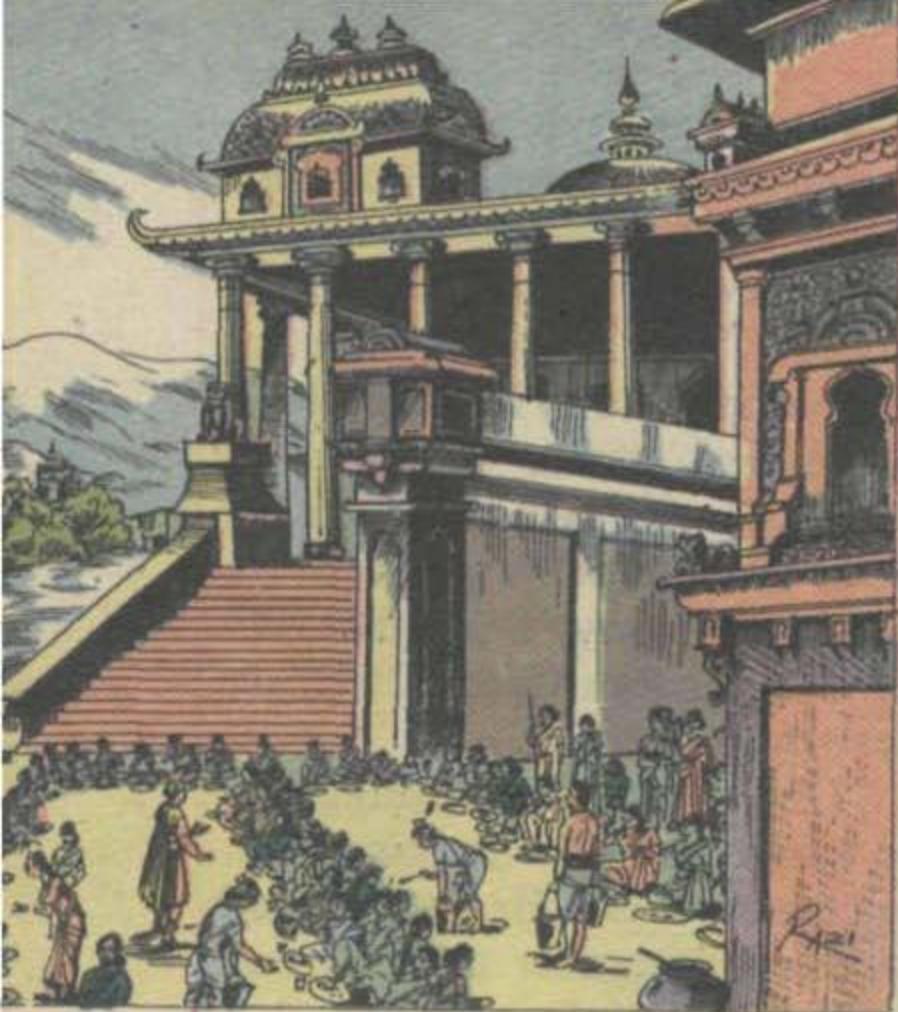
The refugees spent that night in the courtyard of temples. Those who could brave the weather were taken to the *maidan* where the celebrations leading to Holi had been held. Long before nightfall, the refugees reaching the capital had all been settled, much to their relief and comfort. Princess Priyamvada was, however, busy till late in the night. With the help of the attendants, she went all over the palace to decide which parts could be vacated and got ready for billeting the women and children from the next morning. She had no idea how long they would have to stay there and when they would be in a position to return to their villages. So, she looked into every minutest detail to provide all necessities and to ensure their comfort.

Soon after daybreak, Pratapavarma accompanied by Gambhir Singh went round to assure the villagers of all protection. "Your Majesty," wailed some of them, "we've come away leaving all our belongings in our villages. We don't know if anything will be left there by the time we go back. We also don't know when that will be. Suppose our villages, too, are destroyed?"

"Don't worry, everything will be taken care of," the king said, to console them. He then turned to the commander as if he was seeking more information.

"Your Majesty, my soldiers have already gone to the southern parts to guard the villages and the people's belongings," Gambhir Singh reported. "More soldiers have left this morning to relieve those who went there last night. They will remain there till they are relieved in the evening. I've thus arranged for non-stop vigil at the place. The people need not have any fear about the safety of their houses. Your Majesty, I had a look at the halls in the palace, on the western side. They have been kept ready to receive the women and children. I was told, the princess was on her feet





till late in the night supervising the arrangements. She had not woken up when I went to the palace halls in the morning."

"We shall go there as well before we return to the palace," said the king. "You can depend on Priyamvada. She would have seen to all the details."

When the king and the commander reached the western side of the palace, they could see rows and rows of women and children seated on the floor waiting for food to be served. Soon, Princess Priyamvada appeared, along with her maids. They all wore

simple dresses, devoid of all finery, and had very few ornaments on. When they took hold of vessels and ladles from the attendants and began serving food, the womenfolk never for once recognised them as the princess and her maids—till King Pratapavarma and Gambhir Singh approached them and were heard talking to them in appreciative terms. "I'm very happy, Priyamvada," the king was heard saying, "you've come forward to do all this. I'm sure the people will always remember you with gratitude and you'll endear yourself to them. See that all these women and children are given minimum comforts. They need not have any anxiety about their houses and belongings. Gambhir has taken steps to guard them, and soon the villagers should be able to go back to their places."

"We shall keep them here till then, father," said Priyamvada. "Of course, they'll be worried about their houses and will be eager to get back at the earliest, but while they are here, we shall take good care of them, father."

When Pratapavarma and



Gambhir Singh reached the palace courtyard, some soldiers were waiting for them. The king and the commander could see anxiety writ large on their faces. "What's the matter?" Gambhir asked them. "Has anything happened?"

After saluting the king and their commander, they said in a grave voice. "The soldiers who had gone to the southern parts are missing! Either they did not reach there or something must have happened to them after they went there. Not one of them was present there when those who left in the morning reached that place. Also, more houses seems

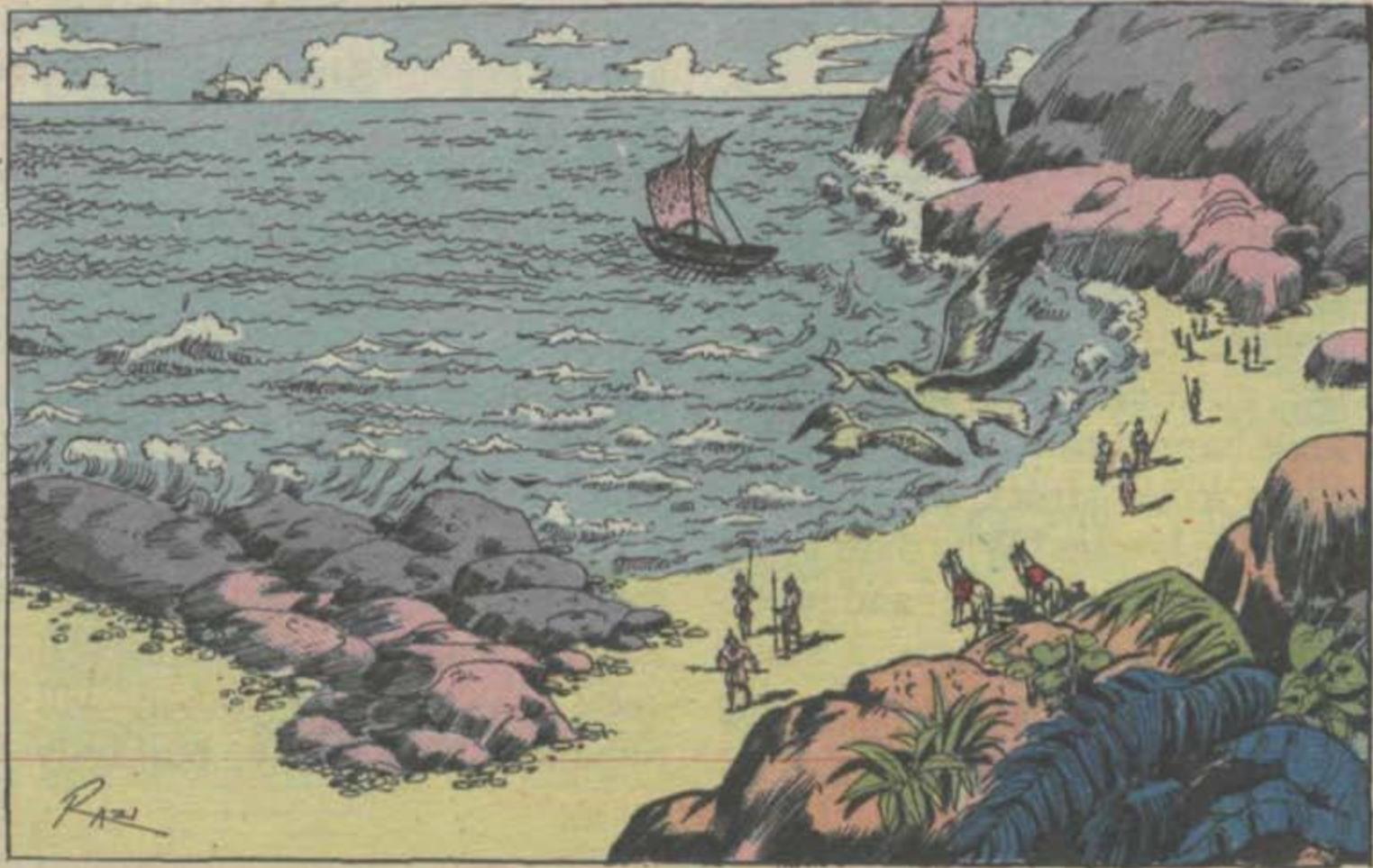
to have been destroyed, sir!"

"But have the soldiers come back? Or are they guarding the village?" Gambhir Singh asked them, impatiently.

"Only three of them came to bring us information, sir, and they have now proceeded to the place again. Captain Veer Singh has gone with them to find out what happened to those who were sent yesterday."

"You may go now," said the commander. "When Veer Singh comes back, let him report to me at once!"

"There'll be panic among the villagers," remarked the king as they walked to the *durbar* hall,





"if we were to inform them that more houses have been destroyed. Let's wait for some more information, Gambhir."

"Yes, Your Majesty," said the commander. "What worries me is the disappearance of the soldiers I had despatched yesterday evening. If they had not reached the disaster area, what would have happened to them? Has the silent killer struck them, along with the houses? Why didn't they offer any resistance and overpower who or whatever it might have been? The mystery only deepens, Your Majesty."

"Gambhir, I think we've only two alternatives," said Pratapavarma, after some contemplation. "Either we send more soldiers to the area, or wait for Veer Singh to come back and tell us what exactly has happened."

"I fully agree with you, Your Majesty," responded Gambhir Singh. "I'll keep more soldiers on the alert to proceed to the south, while I wait for my captain. He should be back before evening." The commander then took leave of the king.

Captain Veer Singh reported to Commander Gambhir Singh immediately on his return in the evening. He looked tired and haggard after a long ride on horseback. "Sir, it's really strange. Our soldiers seem to have just disappeared into thin air! They had reached the village all right, because I could find traces of their footprints on the sandy areas. But what happened to them later, we don't know. The soldiers there now have formed a strategy. Not all of them will be guarding the areas near the seacoast; while a few will keep a watch there, others will remain a little away, but fully



alert. A third group will be still away, but keep in close touch with the two forward groups. If you will permit me, sir, I shall go there again tomorrow morning to find the latest position."

Commander Gambhir Singh approved of his suggestion and sent Captain Veer Singh away. In the evening, he took a round of all the places where the villagers had been settled and satisfied himself that the sudden arrival of refugees had not in any way upset life in the capital. In fact, he found that the people, of their own, had come forward to distribute food and provisions to the villagers. He thought of methods by which he could keep the menfolk engaged from the next day onwards. He also met King Pratapavarma to apprise him of the situation in the capital as well as in the southern parts of the kingdom.

The next morning, Gambhir Singh was getting ready to go on another round of the places where the villagers were staying, when Captain Veer Singh was announced. He appeared quite agitated. "Have you come back, and so soon?" asked Gambhir

Singh. "What's the situation there?"

"Sir, I didn't go. Before I could start, the soldiers from the sea-coast came. The 'devil' has struck again!" Veer Singh said all in one breath.

"What? Did you say 'devil'?" Gambhir Singh almost shouted.

"It was around midnight, sir," Veer Singh narrated. "A huge figure, mountain-high, suddenly appeared. It was neither walking, floating, or flying, but at the same time moving forward. Everything in front of him went underneath—the soldiers, houses, trees! The strangest thing was, there was no sound, no noise whatsoever, sir. The soldiers at the rear watched all this in horror and ran away for their lives! They say, there was no point in resisting or attacking the figure. They could not see its face; it was so high above. Something like a head was swaying this way and that, it appears. The men were terror-stricken and could not speak for a long time. They were running hither and thither all through the night, wondering whether they would not incur your displeasure by so running



away from the post of duty!"

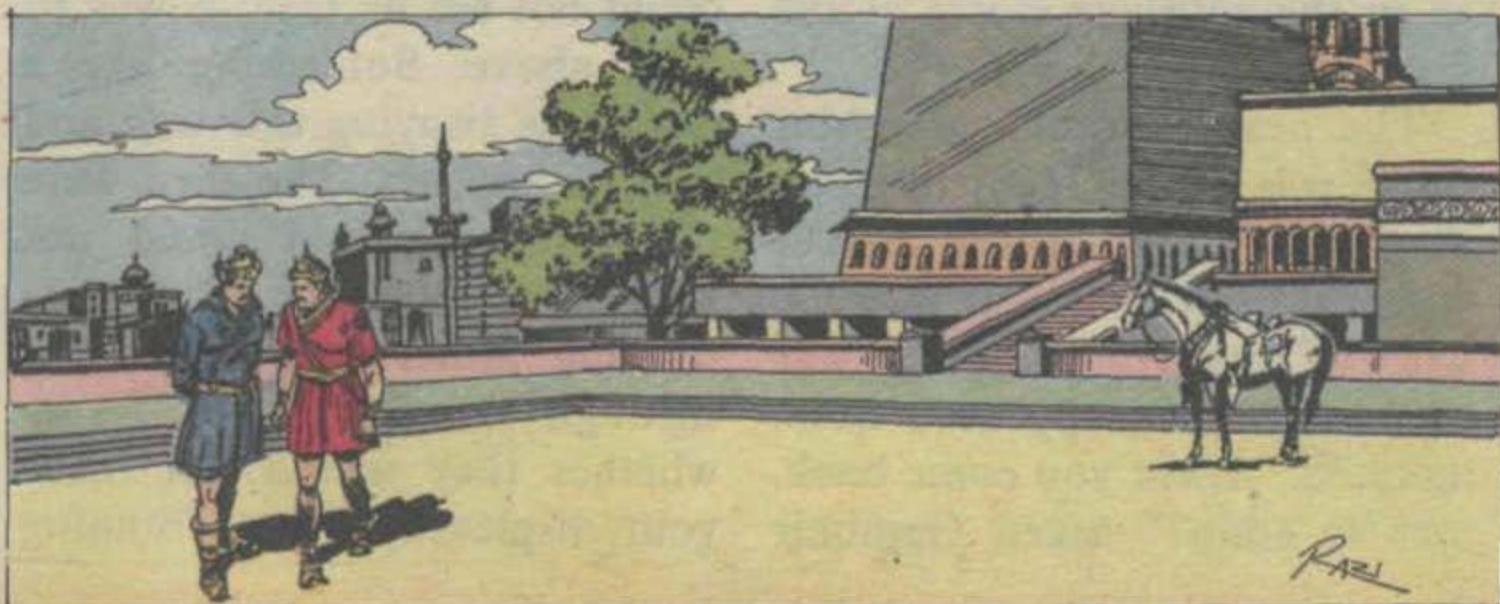
"Did you say devil?" said the commander unbelievingly. "Wonder what kind of *devil* this is! If they had not run away, they too would have perished and we would have remained oblivious of what had happened. Now we have at least some knowledge of what was happening over there. What shall we do?"

Gambhir Singh had said that contemplatively, but when he listened to what Veer Singh had to add, he sat up in his seat. "Sir, I forgot to mention something. According to the soldiers, the figure was moving towards the north. It spared whoever or whatever was on its left or right."

"North? But the northern parts are a long way off!"

muttered Gambhir Singh. "If it is still on its way up there, we shall be able to put an end to its march unless, of course, it has returned to the sea at daybreak. Captain, send some soldiers to the northern parts, but let them not proceed there if they were to see the devil of yours ahead of them! My hunch is, it may not make its appearance during the day. Any-way, the southern seacoast should not be left unguarded. Let more soldiers go there and deploy themselves, using the same strategy like that of yesterday. Meanwhile I must go and report all this to the king. If you were to hear anything more about the devil, you may seek me at the palace, Veer Singh."

—To continue



NEWS FLASH



U.S. PATENT FOR INDIAN BOY

Akhil Rastogi, 11 years old, studies in the 6th grade in an elementary school in Fairfax county near Washington. His mother, a bank employee, suffered damage to the nerves in her right hand. As a result, she was unable to lift the milk jug and pour the contents into a cup without spilling. That set Akhil thinking. Soon, he came out with a solution—in the shape of a plastic screw-on spout with which anybody—even the old and the infirm—can pour milk without spilling. While mother Deepa was happy, family friends prompted Akhil to apply for a patent. The U.S. Administration granted a patent and had it registered. The Indian boy happens to be one of the youngest patent-holders in the U.S.A., which has thus honoured a "distinguished inventor".

HE INVENTED THE 'WORD GAME'

Which child knowing English has not played "Scrabble", the game in which the players spell words out on a board in a crossword pattern? Many children would not know that its inventor was an architect by profession. Alfred Butts passed away early in April at the age of 93. He had developed the game in the 1930s. He tried to sell it to board game manufacturers, but they did not take it. Some 20 years later, a retail store chain made a few and sold them. When its appeal for children came to be known, a company, which had earlier rejected it, accepted it and produced it on a mass scale. From the original version was developed a magnetic set that can be used while travelling. Then came turntable 'editions' and even versions in different foreign languages. A modest estimate is, some 100 million sets would have been made and sold by now. And what did Butts get? "A few cents for each set!" Scrabble helps improve and increase the player's vocabulary.



FORTUNE IN THEIR LOOK



Long ago, there lived a poor man who used to tell his three little sons, "Dear children, try to develop the power of observation. Don't let anything escape your notice. You'll have keen minds and ready wit, which are more valuable than wealth."

The three brothers grew up following the wise advice of their father. Years passed by. The man grew old and weak and one day he died, leaving behind his sons, now three handsome youths.

"Let's go out into the world

and seek our fortune," they said and set off on a journey.

For many weary days they travelled, over mountains and valleys, across rivers and streams. One morning, the eldest one suddenly stopped and, looking at the ground, said, "A horse has just passed this way."

They had not gone very far when the second brother said, carefully examining both sides of the road, "The horse was blind in one eye."

After a furlong, the youngest



one exclaimed, "I think a woman and a child were riding the horse."

"You're right," agreed the other two and they resumed walking.

Soon they came across a man. He was frantically looking for something.

"Have you lost something valuable? You look so disturbed!" said the brothers.

"Yes, I have," replied the stranger.

"Is it a horse?" asked the first brother.

"Indeed, it is so!"

"The animal is surely blind in one eye," put in the second one.

"That's right."

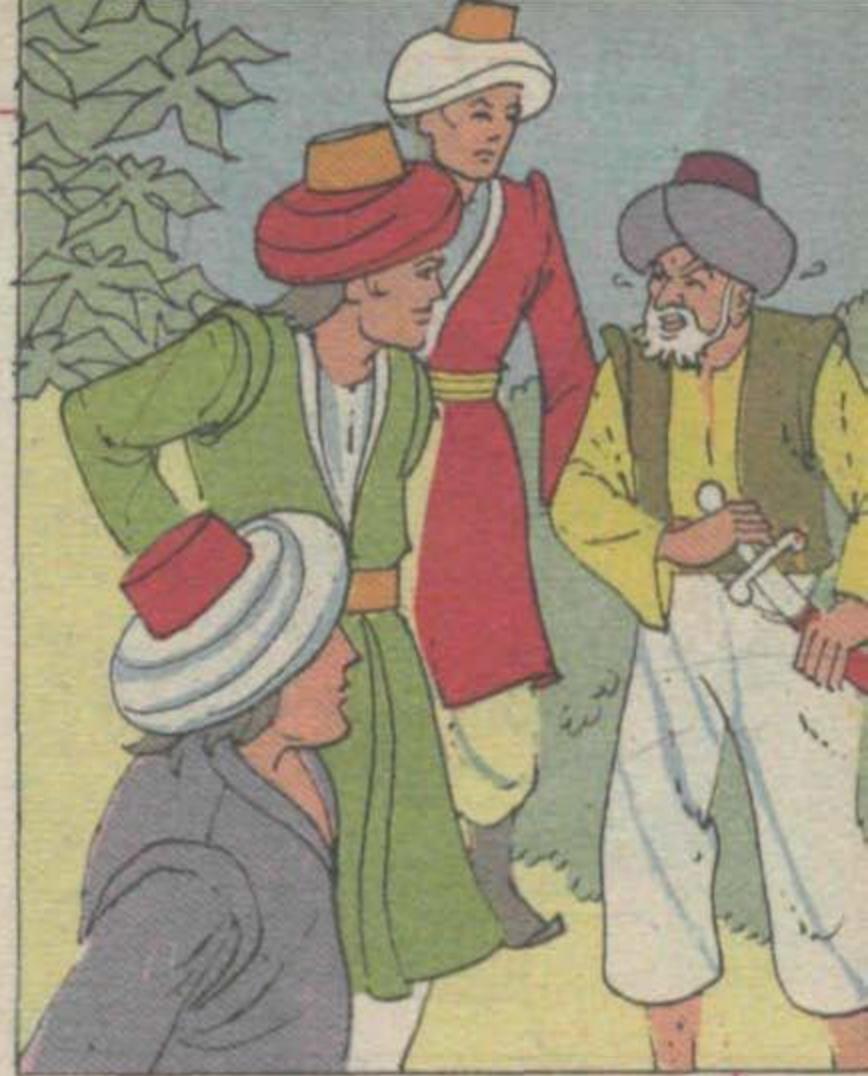
"And blind in the right eye!"

"That's right! But how did you know?" asked the man, greatly surprised.

"The horse carried a lady and a child, I suppose!" added the youngest one.

By now the stranger was full of suspicion. "You're rogues who have stolen my horse!" he shouted angrily.

"We haven't even seen your horse!" replied the three very candidly.

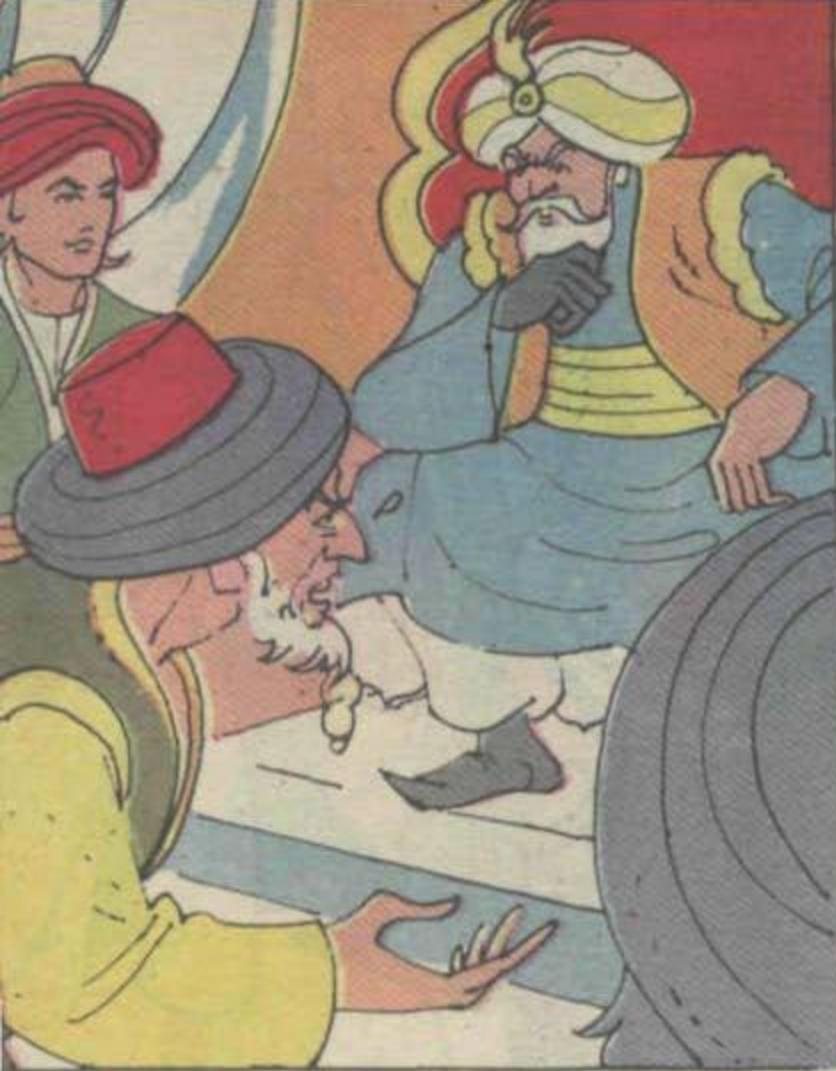


"But you know everything about the animal and even who rode on it! Come on! Tell me, where have you hidden my wife and son?" demanded the traveller stamping his feet.

"Friend," replied the brothers calmly, "we've only learnt how to use our eyes and understand what goes on around us."

But the stranger did not believe them and on the point of his sword made them march to the king's court.

"Lord," he said, "these three young men have stolen my horse, my wife, and my only son. I'm



absolutely certain about it. But they deny the charge."

"But, tell me my good man, how do you prove that they are the culprits?" asked the king.

"My wife and my son followed me on horseback while I drove the sheep. Somehow they lagged behind and missed the way. Well, when I met these three young men they knew that I had lost a horse, that it was blind in the right eye, and it carried a lady along with a child. If they do not know where they are, who else will know?" said the shepherd.

"If what you say is true, then

surely these young men have indeed stolen your horse, perhaps to demand of you some ransom," said the king and looking sternly at the brothers, continued, "Now answer! What have you done with the man's horse, his wife and his only son?"

"Your majesty," they said, bowing gently, "believe us, we're innocent wayfarers, out in search of fortune. In fact, we've never seen the horse nor those who rode on it."

"Yet you know everything about them!" said the king sarcastically.

"From childhood we've learnt how to observe. That's how we could describe the horse without ever having seen it," replied the brothers with a confident air.

The king called his minister and whispered some instructions into his ear. The minister went out, but was soon back with two men carrying a large wooden box. They placed it gently on the floor in the centre of the hall.

"Now, gentlemen, would you please let us know by your power of observation, what is in this box?" asked the king with a soft chuckle as he twitched his



moustache.

There was silence and all eyes turned towards the three brothers who stood unperturbed.

"Well," said the eldest one, "this large wooden box contains only a small round object and nothing more."

"The object is perhaps an apple from your garden, Your Majesty," added the second brother.

"And if it is an apple, it is still unripe," concluded the youngest.

"Let the box be opened," ordered the king.

All held their breath and strained their necks to see what was in it. Indeed, a small unripe apple was all that was inside! The king and his ministers sat dumbfounded.

"But how did you know that the shepherd had lost his horse?" the king asked them.

"The fresh tracks left on the path told us that a horse had passed that way not long ago. When we met the man looking for something with a saddle on his shoulder, we guessed he must be the person to have lost a horse," replied the eldest brother.

"That's clever indeed! But



what made you deduce that the horse was blind in one eye—and that, too, in the right eye?"

"The grass had been nibbled only on the left side of the pathway, and was untouched on the right."

"Wonderful! But how did you so confidently state that a lady and a child were riding the horse?" asked the king, his eyes bright with curiosity.

"As we advanced, we came to a place where the horse had knelt down as the lines cut on the damp earth proved. We also found nearby marks left by a woman's

sandals and small footprints that belonged to a child," replied the youngest brother.

"Excellent!" exclaimed the king. Then turning to the shepherd, he said, "You may now go and look for what you have lost elsewhere, with the help of my soldiers."

The king now offered seats to the young men and asked, "How did you conclude that this wooden box contained an apple and that, too, an unripe one?"

"The manner in which the box was carried by your servants gave us the hint that it was not at all heavy. And the sound of an object rolling in it from one end to the other evidently made us conclude that it was something roundish," said the eldest brother.

"As the box was brought in from the door leading to the

garden, the round object in it, we guessed, could be an apple. For your garden is full of lush green apple trees!" put in the middle brother.

"But how could you so confidently state that the apple was an unripe one?"

"Your Majesty, the season for the apples to mature has not yet come!" answered the youngest brother.

"Bravo!" said the king. "I appoint you my advisers, here and now!"

The young men bowed to the king. They had been out seeking fortune, but they never knew that their desire would be fulfilled that soon! Their eyes moistened with joy and gratefulness for their father who had given them such a golden advice!

— Retold by Anup Kishore Das



CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT-56

BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

The hysterical hyena



When the cat *miaouws* and the dog *barks*, what does the hyena, which is part cat, part dog, do? It *laughs!* Or that is what it sounds like when this peculiar animal decides to produce a sound—at least from a distance. The hysterical laughter is often accompanied by a kind of dance it executes around a heap of bones.

The hyena's legs especially look like those of a dog; other parts of the body resemble those of a cat. However, its body is uncouth, and not well-shaped like that of the sinewy cat or the handsome dog. The head is rather large, with erect ears. As the hind legs are heavier and shorter, the body develops a droop at the back. The animal is 150cm long and has a height of 90cm. The colour of the coat varies from grey to a light brown, with vertical dark stripes along the length of the body. The legs, too, have dark stripes.

The hyena seldom hunts, and is satisfied with eating what other animals leave. This habit has earned it a title: scavenger of the animal world. A timid animal, it avoids human beings, though instances of the hyena 'kid-napping' new born babies and little children are not uncommon.



INDIA THROUGH HER LITERATURE

India is a great country which has nurtured so many languages and so many cultures through the ages. Each major language of India has a rich literature. We know more or less about the great books of the past. But we know little about the outstanding books of our own times. In these pages, Chandamama will tell you the stories of the novels of our age, written in different Indian languages. The narration will be very brief, but we hope, this will inspire our readers to read the full book in original or in translation.

— Editor

STORM IN THE HILL-TOWN

Digboy in Assam is a town on the hills, surrounded by forests. The town has grown because petroleum was found deep under the rocks.

Labourers gathered there from many parts of India. They belonged to different religions, but they were friendly towards one another.

Among them was Chandi Abhir. His wife was ill, but he did not have the means to provide her with proper food and medicine. She died, leaving behind a sweet girl, Pannu, among her other children.

There was an official named Dinbeshwar who wished to marry Jahanara. While Dinbeshwar was a Hindu, Jahanara was a Muslim. But Dinbeshwar did not mind becoming a Muslim, and assumed a new name Giasuddin, for the sake of marrying Jahanara.

Jahanara, however, fell ill and she knew that her days were numbered. Her husband, Giasuddin, was a strong character, always ready to stand for justice. She was sad that she could not give him the happiness he deserved. Pannu took great care of her when she was dying. She suggested that Pannu should marry Giasuddin after her death.

But, for that to be possible, Giasuddin must become a Hindu once again! That was what Pannu's father demanded. Meanwhile a young man, Chatterjee, loved Pannu. But he was rather shy. Conditions in the city changed rapidly. Events that appeared far more important than personal pleasures and sorrows captured everybody's attention. The British owners of the oil company did not like the workers forming their union. Also, as the company got modern machinery, manual labour became less and less necessary. Many workers were retrenched.

There was unrest among the workers. The company was afraid of their unity. A





effort was made to breed hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims. A man was hired to throw beef into a Hindu temple. But he was found out and the conspiracy exposed.

This was on the eve of World War II. The British, in those days, deliberately kept their distance from the natives. There was no exchange of human emotions between the British and the Indians. When the workers went on a strike and the company brought truck-loads of fresh workers from outside, the striking workers obstructed the passage of the trucks. One irresponsible and haughty Englishman shot down four leading participants. Among them was Pannu's father, Chandi, the newly married Borua who was a singer, Chatterjee, and also the repentant worker, Bodhan, who had agreed to throw beef into the temple.

However, among the foreigners, there were kind and compassionate characters, too. One of them was Mrs. Flemias. She stood by the exploited and the injured.

The novel ends with the warning that greater storms are ahead!

PRATIPAD in Assamese is a significant novel by Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, a recipient of the Jnanapith Award. Under the auspices of the National Book Trust, India, the novel has been translated into several Indian languages. Although the writer does not say it, the backdrop of the novel is the Digboi Labour Strike of 1939, involving nearly 10,000 labourers. The characters and situations described are most realistic.

DO YOU KNOW?

- Which was the capital of Tipu, the Sultan of Mysore?
- The eagle and the snake are pictured on the flag of a country. Which country?
- Who introduced tobacco in England?
- What significant event took place on September 3, 1939?
- Which work of Rabindranath Tagore fetched him the Nobel Prize for Literature?
- Who invented dynamite?
- From where did the Holkars rule?
- In which country is eucalyptus commonly grown?
- When did Ceylon become Sri Lanka?
- Who came to be known as the 'saint of Sabarmati'?
- Who was the founder of Persia?
- Which social reformer of India fought against child marriage and the custom of Sati?
- Name the person who first went into space.
- Which is the biggest planet in the Solar System?
- The Golden Temple of Amritsar has been built at the site where one of the Sikh Gurus had lived. Which Guru?
- An animal has a tongue one foot long. Yet it has no voice. Which animal?
- Who is the youngest among the Nobel Peace Prize winners?
- Who founded the Arya Samaj?
- Where are the Kolar Gold Mines situated—in which State?
- Has the Speaker the power to dissolve the Lok Sabha? If not, who has that power?

ANSWERS

- Singapore
- Mexico
- The English adventurer, Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618).
- Britain declared war on Hitler's Germany, which then led to World War II.
- Gitanjali, originally written in Bengali and translated into English by the poet himself.
- Alfred Nobel, the Swedish chemist, received the award in 1964.
- Indore, in present day Madhya Pradesh.
- Australia
- Swami Dayanand Saraswati
- Karnataka
- No. The President holds that power.
- May 1972





New Tales of King Vikram and
the Vampire

Worldly Wisdom

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunder-claps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. And I don't know why! Don't be under the impression that you're clever in whatever you do. That's the general characteristic of artists, sculptors, and other people like them. They all think too much."



of themselves. An example is Kaladas, the famous sculptor. He threw away a chance to become great. Let me tell you his story." The vampire then narrated the story.

Keertisen of Krishnagiri was a lover of art and literature. He would often listen to poets and in appreciation of their creative work, he used to reward them with titles and gifts. Competitions among poets were a frequent happening in his *durbar*. Sometimes he would also try his own hand at composing poetry. But, then, poetry was only one of his many loves. He had a fancy for paintings and he adorned the palace with paintings at all conceivable places. So were sculptures, which found a place in every nook and corner of the magnificent palace.

One day, Keertisen wished to erect a beautiful hall in the royal garden. He began contemplating where it should be located and who should be engaged to construct it. He had heard of a sculptor called Kaladas. Though he lived in a village, people used to go to him from all parts of the country to admire his art and creations. Some of them were

even prepared to buy the pieces, but as he was not greedy at all, he would never sell them for a price. He gave them away, without taking any money, if he found his admirers genuinely interested in his work.

What drew King Keertisen to Kaladas was the artist's humility. He now wished to make him the royal sculptor and sent word through his messengers who were asked to bring Kaladas to the *durbar*. But Kaladas would not accept the king's offer. "I don't wish to have a title or any special status," he told the king's messengers. "I prefer to remain an ordinary artist in this village. Please request your king to excuse me."

When the messengers went back to the king, Keertisen decided that he would himself go and make a personal request to Kaladas. "You're a very talented sculptor," the king told Kaladas. "Why should you hide your talents from the people? Art is nothing personal; it is meant for the people, and they should appreciate it, and admire it. An artist must move among the people and get recognised by and among them. The world should be aware of



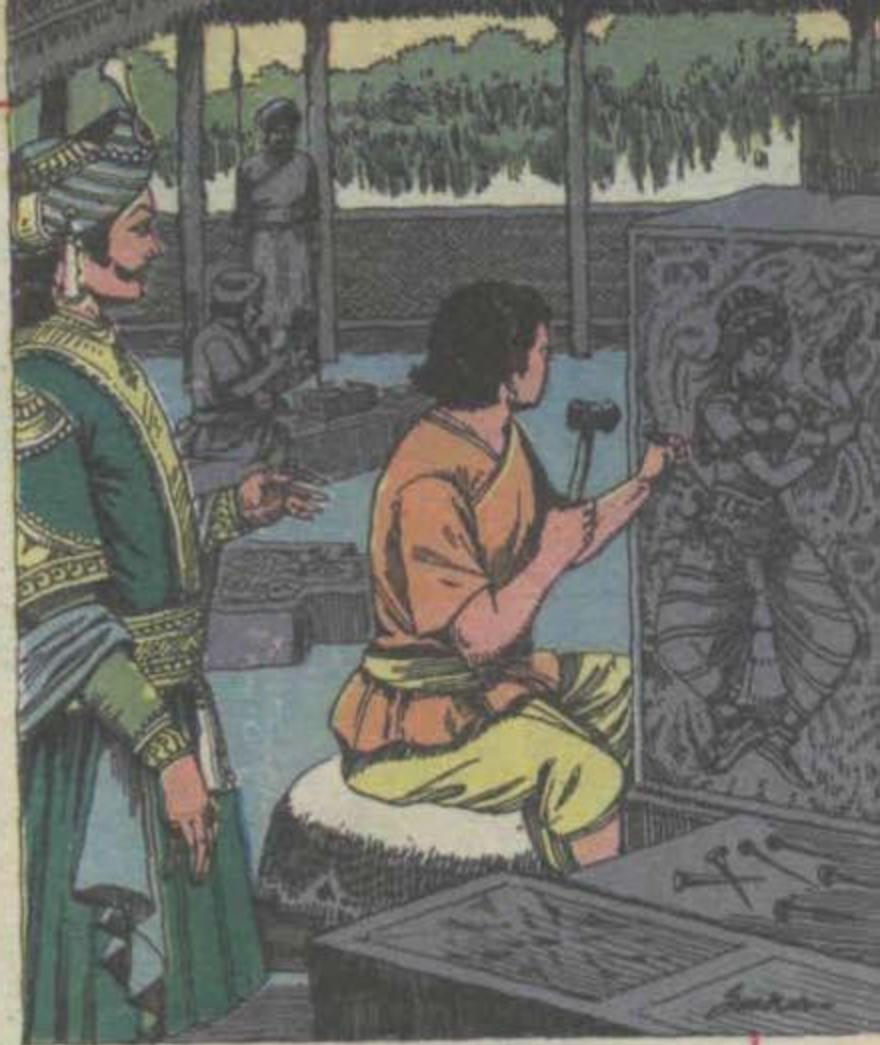
people like you. It is in recognition of your talents that I wish to make you my court sculptor. I hope you'll not reject it."

"Royalty is invariably like this," remarked Kaladas, giving enough indication to Keertisen that he was once again rejecting the royal offer. "The kings take advantage of the power they wield and become arrogant, thinking that everybody would surrender to them. Somehow, I've grown an aversion toward royalty. Please bear with me, O King!"

"Don't equate me with other kings, Kaladas," pleaded Keertisen. "I've a great regard for artists. I place people like you even above royalty; and give them due respect. Please go with me and help me build the sculptured hall that I have in mind."

Kaladas also had a great regard for Keertisen. He thought for a while and said, "All right, as you wish, O King!" He got ready to accompany Keertisen to his palace, where the king chose a good place for Kaladas to stay and gave him all facilities to do his work on the hall.

One day, Princess Keertijyoti went up to the garden to see how



far the work on the hall had progressed. She happened to see some of the sculptures made by Kaladas. She was carried away by their beauty and excellence. Her attention soon fell on the sculptor and not only found him handsome but wondered if he was not someone from the heavens up above. There was an aura about him. Then and there she decided that if ever she were to marry, she would marry only this youth, and none else.

Thereafter, the princess made it a point to visit the place every day, and tried to get closer and



closer to Kaladas. She discussed with him various aspects of art, particularly about architecture and sculpture. However, she avoided disclosing her desire to him.

At last, the hall was ready. It was on the whole an exquisite creation. The king invited all the important persons in the kingdom and himself took them round the palace pointing to them the sculptures done by Kaladas. They were unanimous in their praise of the artist and of his creations. Keertisen announced that the hall would be declared open after ten

days, with a dance by the court dancer, Mayavati. He invited the rulers of all the neighbouring kingdoms for the inauguration.

Meanwhile, Princess Keertijyoti waited for an opportunity to reveal her wish to Kaladas. He was shocked beyond belief. "Have you forgotten who you are?" he said, rather angrily. "You're a princess and I'm only an ordinary sculptor. How then can we marry each other?"

The princess protested. "I don't differentiate between people in high positions and of low situations. Everybody is equal in my eyes. I see you as a great sculptor, and I'm not looking for anything else or anything more."

Kaladas thought for a while and then said, "All right, but do you think your father will agree to our marriage? You may ascertain his views within a week, and then we shall take a final decision."

Keertijyoti accepted his suggestion. However, before one week went by, on the fourth day, Kaladas left Krishnagiri without telling anybody.

The vampire concluded the story there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! Kaladas



lacked worldly wisdom. Don't you think that's why he suddenly disappeared from the scene? He knew that it was a princess who was seeking his hand, and he had asked her to get her father's permission within a week. He was also aware how much the king respected him and admired his work. He would have readily agreed to his marrying the princess. Though he was sure of this, he did not wait till he heard the king's views at the end of the week he had given the princess, and stealthily left the place. That shows he had no knowledge of the world and the people's minds. If you know the answers to my questions and yet decide not to answer me, mind you, your head will be blown to pieces!"

King Vikramaditya thought for a while before he answered the vampire. "It was not as though

Kaladas lacked worldly knowledge. In fact, he had a lot of worldly wisdom. Though he had given a full week's time to the princess to ascertain her father's views, he knew that she would not really need more than a day for that. And if he had agreed to her wish, she would have hurried to inform him of that. However, he waited for not one day, or two days, but for full four days. He then guessed that King Keertisen had not agreed to their marriage. He was willing to marry her only with the approval of everybody. That does not mean that he was thinking too much of himself."

The vampire realised that the king had once again outsmarted him. He flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse along with him. And Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.



WORLD OF NATURE

GREEN GOLD

That is how the coconut tree is often described, because every part of the tree is put to some use or the other. The water inside a tender coconut makes a delicious drink. It is believed to contain sucrose, minerals and vitamins. People enjoy eating the sweet kernel, too. The kernel in a ripe fruit is very commonly used as an ingredient in various dishes, like *chutney*. The dried kernel called copra is crushed for extracting edible oil which is a popular cooking medium. The oil is also used in preparing medicines, cosmetics and soap. After extraction of oil, the



residue is made into 'cakes' which is considered a good cattle feed. The shell of the nut is cleverly handcrafted to make attractive curios. The fibre covering the shell, called coir, is given the shape of ropes, carpets, door-mats, mattresses and even brushes. The coconut leaves have ribs, which are used for making brooms and brushes. The leaves are 'woven'

before they are stacked in layers after layers as thatched roofs for huts. They are waterproof and can withstand very heavy rain. The trunks of coconut trees are used as supports while constructing huts. The coconut palms reach a height of 25 metres and start yielding three to four years after planting. A tree can give upto 300 nuts in a year. They are plucked once in two months.

THE MALE GETS PREGNANT!

The tiny sea-horse found in the shallow waters of warm seas has several peculiarities. This fish swims upright—unlike most of the fish which swim in horizontal movements. The sea-horse, which has a face like that of the popular land animal, has two



eyes which are capable of looking in different directions. When it meets a female, it empties the pouch on its belly of water. The female approaches the male and lays her eggs—200 at a time—in the pouch. For the next four or five weeks, the pregnant male goes about carrying the eggs in his swollen pouch, which has a mouth. It opens wide when it is time for the babies to come out.



VEER HANUMAN

33

(From Chandrasena, whom Mahiravana covets, Hanuman comes to know of the secrets of the Patala king and goes in search of the casket in which five beetles guard Mahiravana's life. When he sees the casket in Hanuman's hand, Mahiravana realises the danger he faces. Lord Siva blesses Hanuman with five mouths, and he swallows all the five beetles together. Thereafter, Mahiravana is easily killed. Now Hanuman has to keep his promise to Chandrasena.)

Chandrasena heaved a great sigh of relief when Vatsala went and told her that Mahiravana had been killed in war with Rama and Lakshmana and that Matsya Vallabha had been crowned the King of Patala. "Believe me, Chandrasena, Rama and Lakshmana are on their way to see you!"

Chandrasena, who was just waiting to hear this, was so happy that she could not control her excitement. She began preparations for duly receiving Rama and Lakshmana in her chambers. She decorated the place with flowers and bunting, and kept the offerings, comprising flowers and sandal paste, at the entrance

A PROMISE IS KEPT





itself. She was dying to fall at Rama's feet and embrace them in worship.

Before long they arrived, with Hanuman leading the brothers. Rama had a smile on his face, on seeing which Chandrasena coyly lowered her head and lost herself in ecstasy. She raised her head only when she heard Hanuman tell her, "I've kept my promise. I've brought Rama to you. Aren't you satisfied?"

Chandrasena looked up at Rama for a few moments and then fell at his feet, which became wet with joyous tears from her

eyes. She then got up and made Rama place his feet on a golden plate. She washed them and sprinkled the water on her head. She also showered him with flowers from another plate and applied sandal paste on his face, arms, and body. All the while she was unable to utter a single word. How could she talk when her heart was full with joy and ecstasy?

Chandrasena caught hold of Rama's hand and led him to a decorated cot. As he sat there, she took a garland and was about to place it around his neck when it flew from her hands and fell at his feet! A shocked Chandrasena stood stock-still. It was Hanuman who broke the silence. "Please forgive me. It's true I gave you word that I would bring Rama to you, and I kept my word. I know what is in your mind. That you wish to marry him. But he is already married, and he won't take a second woman. You should worship him like a god. He's your protector. You should not have other desires."

Chandrasena listened to Hanuman's advice and wanted to say

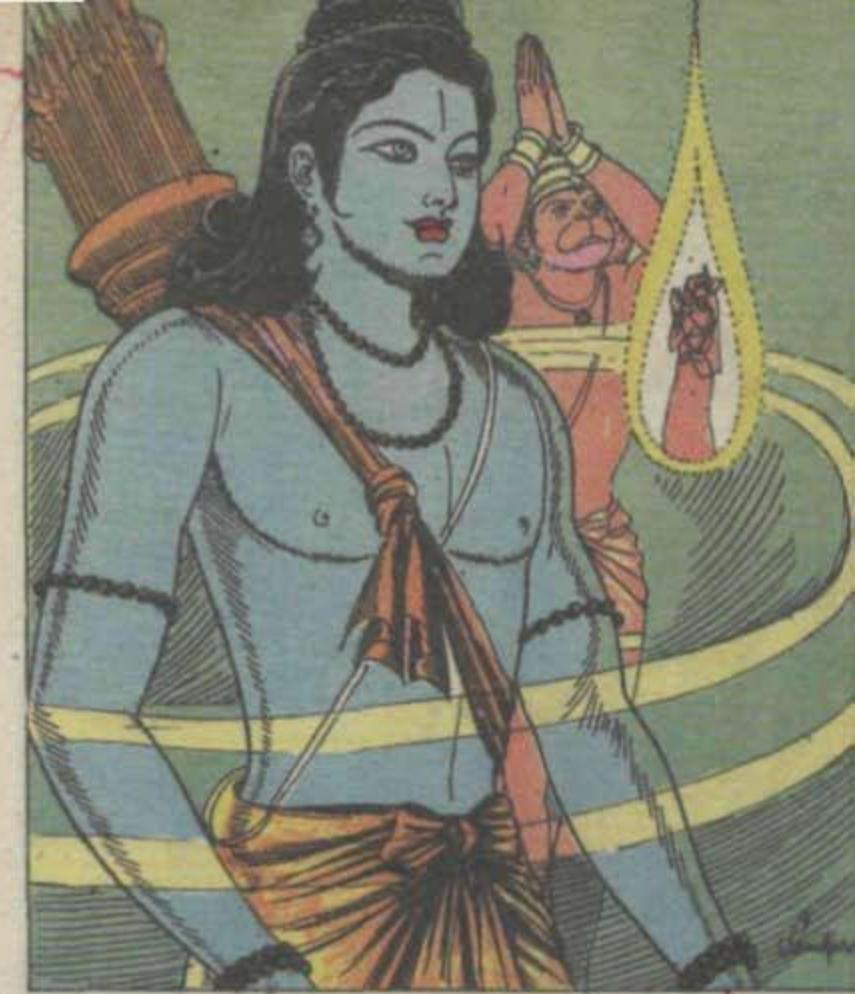


something. But she fell into silence once again. "Chandrasena, in my present role as Rama, I've taken a vow that I'll take only one woman as my wife," said Rama in trying to console her. "In my next incarnation as Krishna, you'll be my wife as Satyabhama. So you shouldn't have any worry now."

Chandrasena saw Lord Vishnu where Rama was standing. An aura spread all over and soon Chandrasena herself disappeared into the aura merging herself with the Lord. Hanuman forgot himself, because he was a witness to Rama's extreme kindness and pity towards his devotee. He prostrated before Rama. He could not then think of anything else than sending Ravana to his doom. He dreamt how the Vanara soldiers would fight the demons and kill Ravana.

At that moment, Matsya Vallabha came there. He, too, prostrated at the feet of Rama, Lakshmana, and Hanuman. He took them to his palace and respectfully extended to them all courtesies.

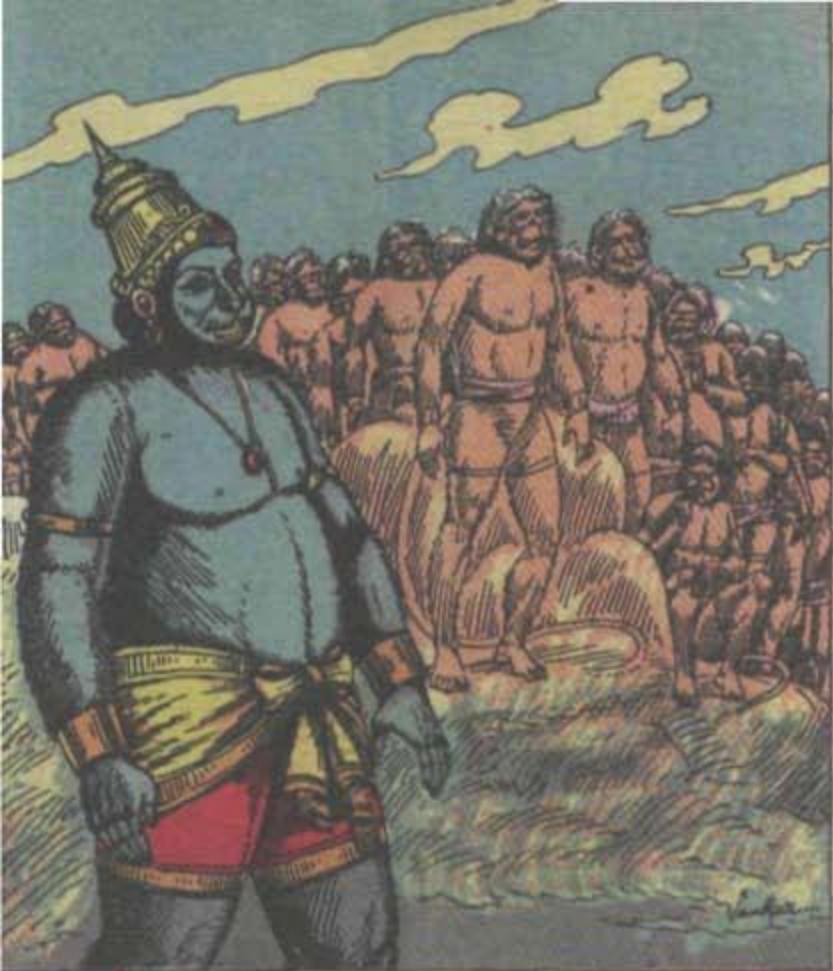
After they took leave of the



Patala king, Rama, Lakshmana, and Hanuman started for Lanka. Hanuman carried the brothers on his shoulders and flew from Patala towards Lanka. The Vanara soldiers were scanning the skies as they anxiously awaited their return. Jambava reassured them that their leaders would soon come back victorious..

Meanwhile in Lanka, the Rakshasa soldiers were engaged in merry-making during the lull in the war. They intoxicated themselves and went about screaming and shouting. Seeing their enthu-





siasm, Ravana, too, revelled himself in mirth. He was expecting Mahiravana to go to him any moment and place at his feet the heads of Rama and Lakshmana. Once that happened, he would show the heads to Sita and convince her that there was no point in waiting for her lord to rescue her.

But, why was Mahiravana delaying his arrival? Ravana wondered. How long would he be made to wait? He became impatient. He climbed onto the ramparts and watched whether there was any trace of Mahiravana

coming. He could only see the Vanara soldiers looking at the sky and towards the sea. He saw anxiety writ large on their faces. He concluded that Rama and Lakshmana might have met their end at the hands of Mahiravana.

He also noticed Vibhishana with a sad look standing near the Vanara soldiers. "Brother!" he called out to Vibhishana. "I never knew you could be such a simpleton. Why do you still want to side with the enemy? By now, Mahiravana would have beheaded them and offered them to Mother Kali! Soon he would come to me with their heads. Don't you wish to see that? Who's there now to protect you? I'm ready to forgive you even now, considering that you're my brother. You may leave your newfound friends and return to our fold. You can still lead a grand life!"

When he heard from Ravana that Rama and Lakshmana might have been killed, Vibhishana pressed his ears hard so that he would not hear anything more tragic about them. Would it be true that Mahiravana had sacrificed the two brothers to



Mother Kali? Copious tears cascaded from Vibhishana's eyes. It was then left to Sugriva to console Vibhishana and assure him that no harm would have been done to Rama and Lakshmana, and that Hanuman would soon be bringing them back safe. Sugriva, however, was himself upset because there had been no information from Hanuman till then.

Ravana called some demonses passing that way then, and asked them to tell Sita that he would soon be going to her with the heads of Rama and Lakshmana and she should get ready to marry him. The women, however, knew that nothing like that was going to happen, and that Ravana's hopes were all unfounded. They remembered how he had, once earlier, jumped for joy when he thought that Rama and Lakshmana had been killed in battle. They were sure that, unless he returned Sita to her husband, their lord and king would have no escape from death. But they dared not tell him all that to his face. They merely bowed to him and went away.

Ravana climbed down from



the ramparts and went back to his apartments where he stood by a large window awaiting Mahiravana. He thought he saw some movements at a distance. "There! Mahiravana is coming with the heads of Rama and Lakshmana!" he shouted joyously. "Where's the golden salver? Let me keep the heads on the salver! Hurry up!"

Jambava, who was scanning the horizon without taking his eyes off the skies even for a moment, was now able to see a familiar figure—though only as a speck. He knew who it was. He



Their shouts reached every nook and corner of Lanka city. The demons suddenly stopped their merry-making and fell silent. What would have happened to Mahiravana, who they were expecting to bring to them the heads of Rama and Lakshmana? They stood stone-still.

Ravana, too, heard the victorious shouts of the Vanara soldiers. He went up to the window and saw for himself Hanuman carrying Rama and Lakshmana on his shoulders—alive. What, then, was the fate of Mahiravana? He racked his brain to find an answer. Would he have met his end at the hands of either Hanuman or Rama? Ravana felt as if he had been struck by a thunderbolt. There was only Mahiravana who he could depend on. Now he, too, was gone.

While Ravana was contemplating his own fate, a soldier came and bowed to him. "Lord! Hanuman has come back; he seems to have rescued Rama and Lakshmana. They have had a lot of victories in Patala."

All this was greatly shocking to Ravana, who fell down uncon-

turned to Angada, who then asked him, "Isn't it some good sign?"

Jambava pointed to a spot on the horizon. "There! Hanuman is coming! Our worries are all over!"

The Vanara soldiers shouted joyously. "Our Hanuman is clever, isn't he? Look at that! He's carrying Rama and Lakshmana on his shoulders!" When the Vanara soldiers saw a smiling Hanuman slowly descending, they again gave a loud shout which reverberated along the entire skies.





cious in a swoon. It took some time for him to regain consciousness. Now he appeared very angry. He was itching to take revenge on Rama and Lakshmana, who had annihilated all of his relations. "My son Indrajit! He was my very life!. I'll take revenge on Lakshmana, who was responsible for his death. He may hide himself anywhere, but I'll get at him. He may be in the protection of the Vanaras, but he may not be able to escape from this Ravana! Let me just see him! I shall cut him to a thousand pieces!" Ravana shouted aloud.

Mandodari was upset when she heard her husband shouting his breath out. She cried bitterly. "Don't worry, my queen!" Ravana tried to pacify her. "I don't need anyone's help to put an end to Lakshmana. I thought Mahiravana would do it for me;

he just wasted my time! I should not have depended on him. He and his brother were cowards. That's why Rama could so easily kill them! Where's my sword?" roared Ravana.

Ravana suddenly remembered that he had not visited the temple that day. How could he go for a battle without seeking the blessings of Mother Kali? So, he straight away proceeded to the temple and prostrated before the huge idol. He found Her eyes aglow emitting a deep red brilliance all around."

The King of Lanka then went into a deep meditation, chanting all the *mantras* to strengthen his mind and physical prowess. Suddenly he realised it was dawn already. He heard swords clashing. So, the battle had started. There was no moment to lose.

—To continue



A Modern Maharshi

He established a women's university—the first in India—in 1916, when he was 58. He was also its first Principal. He was conferred with a Doctorate of Literature *honoris causa* by another university 26 years later. More honours and awards followed in quick succession. The first title—'Padma Vibhushan'—was awarded to him when he was 97. Three years later came 'Bharat Ratna'. But India remembers him as *Maharshi Karve*. In modern India, only very few have earned that affectionate appellation from the people.

Dhondo Keshav Karve (1858-1962) belonged to a rich family from whom the rulers of the princely states of Maharashtra used to take loans. Soon the family was reduced to poverty. One day, their elder brother asked Dhondu and Bhiku to go with him to collect the 'dakshina' of ten rupees being distributed by a Maharaja. "Children," their mother advised them, "never depend on charity. Work and earn your living. Your hands must give, not take. God has given you hands and intelligence; use them for a good cause." Dhondu remembered these words always.

Dhondu was only 15 when he married 7-year-old Radhabai. He taught her how to read and write. When he graduated, he could have easily secured a lucrative job, but he preferred the teacher's vocation. His house in Bombay was like a students' lodge. They had all come from his village for higher studies.

Following the abolition of *sati*, banning the self-immolation of the wife on the husband's pyre, the number of child widows went up and their condition became deplorable. On the death of Radhabai, Dhondu married his friend's sister, then a widow. They were boycotted by society. Soon afterwards, he established an Anath Ashram for destitute women in Pune where they had shifted from Bombay. When the number of inmates began increasing, the Ashram was moved to Hingne, a village 10 km away.

He established the Nishkam Karma Math for selfless resident workers. A residential school for girls—especially young widows—was attached to the Math. Dhondu got the idea of a women's university from Japan. Whatever he had saved till then, he gave everything to the school. On his 61st birthday, the women of Maharashtra presented him a purse of Rs. 2,500. Then came a huge donation from the Thackersey family. The school was re-named Shrimati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey (SNDT) University.

Prime Minister Nehru went to Pune to confer 'Bharat Ratna' on *Maharshi Karve*. He remarked : "Who am I in front of this Himalayan personality? We will be lucky if we can inculcate even a small bit of his great qualities—dedication and simplicity."



Ping-pong between clubs

Jan-Ove Waldner of Sweden, the Olympic TT champion, plays for a Swedish club. A club in Germany is keen on getting him. The Swedish Club has put a price for him—a mind-boggling one million Deutsch Marks (615,000 dollars)—for his release and transfer. Now, who's playing ping-pong?



A swim feat

Dharamtar and the Gateway of India in Bombay are 27 nautical miles apart and Rihen Mehta swam the distance in 9 hrs. 43 min. 56 sec. on January 31. The event was, at one time, contemplated as a competition, which did not come off. So, he swam solo as a challenge. It was pitch dark when he took the plunge at 4.40 a.m. Two other swimmers took turns to keep him company till the day dawned. For the final 6 hours, he was alone in the cold water. Here comes the surprise : Rihen is only 11 years! For his age, he exhibited a lot of skill, stamina, and guts!

Sports Snippets



New Record

Probably for the first time after the country known as Czechoslovakia was split on the eve of New Year and the United Nations admitted Czech and Slovakia as independent sovereign nations, a Czech did his country proud by creating a world record. The credit goes to the Olympic champion Jan Zelezny—a Czech—who threw the javelin 95.54 metres, bettering the record set by Britain's Steve Backley by 4.08 metres. This happened at the Sanlam Super Athletic Meet in Pietersburg, South Africa, on April 6.



Who is smarter?



Muthuraman of Chinnavayal was a small farmer. He was honest and simple, besides being funny. But he was not at all hard-working, especially after he brought a wife home. At the slightest pretext, he would refuse to go to the farm and, instead, sleep during the day, getting up only to eat his lunch whenever his wife, Ratnam, went and called him. However, he was clever and quick-witted and managed to

cross the hurdle whenever he faced any problem.

He did have a big problem which he had kept to himself, without confiding in his wife. Before his marriage, he had borrowed money from a friend and he had been unable to return the loan as promised. The friend, Muneeswar, waited till the excitement of the marriage was all over and then called on Muthuraman, who extended to



his friend an affectionate welcome, though he could guess the real purpose of his friend's visit, and employed all possible methods to avoid any talk about the unpaid loan, at least in front of his wife. After formally introducing Ratnam to his friend, he sent her packing to the kitchen to prepare a special lunch, disregarding the feeble protests made by Muneeswar.

"That'll be a strain for your wife, Muthu," said Muneeswar. "Why bother her? After all, I was only passing this way and thought I would..."

Ratnam was still standing behind her husband, and did not notice the way his face went red. Muthuraman did not allow his friend to complete the sentence, though he could guess what Muneeswar really wanted to say. "No, no! That's all right, you're always welcome. You must stay for lunch. I've a lot to talk to you about my farm. Now, Ratnam, you go and hurry up! We must not delay his departure, he may have a lot of things to attend!"

After the woman disappeared into the kitchen, Muthuraman began the conversation—about his farm suffering from drought and the yield turning out to be poor and how he was seriously wondering whether he should not sell it away and buy a place in the market for running a shop. "Would you like to consider the possibility of buying it from me?" he asked Muneeswar at the end of a non-stop one-sided conversation. He had till then not given him an opportunity to say a word, except uttering some 'Ah's, 'Hmm's and 'Ha-ha's.

"A farm? Buying a farm?" exclaimed Muneeswar doubtfully. "What can a money-lender



like me do with a farm? Where can I have the time to go there and be there from morning till evening, when all the while I must be going round and collecting money from my debtors? That reminds me, Muthu..."

Fortunately for Muthuraman, his wife just then came and announced that food was ready. "Come on, my good friend, let's share a meal."

After they washed their hands and feet with the water poured from a vessel by Ratnam herself, the two friends sat down for lunch. Muthuraman prodded and prompted Muneeswar to comment on the different dishes and utter words of praise for Ratnan's talent for cooking. Muneeswar was, unlike most money-lenders, a gentleman and decided not to broach the subject of the money his friend owed him, especially after enjoying his hospitality. So he merely said, "I shall see you again after a week, Muthu," and went away.

Ratnam, who was at the porch, heard her husband heaving a heavy sigh of relief. "I'm glad, your friend liked the meal," she said, trying to assure him that she



did not find it any strain to prepare a meal at such short notice. "We shall give him something better when he comes next time."

"How're you certain that he'll come in the morning and stay for lunch?" Muthuraman tried not to sound harsh to his wife. "Of course, we'll certainly ask him to stay for food if he appears in the morning." He left it at that, discreetly avoiding any further conversation about his friend.

Came the next week, and for one or two days there was no sign of Muneeswar. But he turned up



the next day when, luckily, Muthuraman was alone at home. It was evening and Ratnam had gone to the temple. Muthuraman did not lack in courtesies, but Muneeswar came to the point without beating about the bush. "I've come to collect my money. I waited all these days, Muthu, and you cleverly kept silent about your promise of returning the loan to me in six months. It's nearing a year and I must get it back today, this very moment!"

Muthuraman was really taken aback. He never expected his friend to act tough. "What's this,

Muneeswar? Did I ever tell you that I won't return your loan? It's true, I had taken the money only for six months. But you know how it happens—what with a sudden marriage and the failure of crops, and all that. I was only taking some extra few days before I repaid the money to you," he almost pleaded.

"But your wife must have brought some dowry for you, Muthu," prompted Muneeswar. "You can spare some amount from that money, can't you?"

"Dowry from Ratnam?" asked Muthuraman. "Not one paisa did I get from her parents! They thought I am a rich farmer. You see, I spent a bit lavishly with the money I took from you and probably they thought that I'm well off! It was all my fault, my good friend. No, I'm not trying to give you any excuse, but believe me, what I say is the whole truth. I was hoping that my farm would help me, but the crops failed, and now the rains have also failed.."

"Enough, Muthu!" shouted Muneeswar. "I shall not have any more of your sob-stories. I don't care what you do or how, but I'll come exactly a week later and I



want you to keep the money ready—all the one thousand rupees you had borrowed. If you pay, we shall remain friends, otherwise I shall haul you before the magistrate!"

Muneeswar did not wait for a reply or response from Muthuraman, who was lost in thoughts how he would manage to collect one thousand rupees to pay back his friend. In fact, he did not realise that Muneeswar had already left the place. He consoled himself on one count—Ratnam was not there to listen to their conversation and to see his discomfiture in front of his friend.

"I saw your friend at a distance," said Ratnam as she entered the house. "Did he come here? Why didn't you ask him to stay for dinner?"

Muthuraman was not sure what reply he should give his wife. An extra minute of silence went by. "Oh! Muneeswar? Yes, he was here, but he left in a hurry. He had some urgent work. He'll come next week."

Ratnam was satisfied with his reply. After all, she was to get another opportunity to exhibit



her cooking talents. She quietly went inside without questioning why Muneeswar had come. Without her realising it, one week went by. Unusually, Muthuraman was up early that day, and Ratnam noticed that he was walking up and down in the room or sitting on the windowsill brooding. She was rather baffled by her husband's behaviour. "So, today also, you don't want to go to the farm? If you keep yourself away from the farm for days together, you may find someone else claiming it when you go there next!" she admon-



ished him.

"Ratnam, I'm in trouble! I'm sorry I didn't tell you earlier," Muthuraman at last decided to share his worry with his wife and seek her help.

"Trouble? What trouble?" asked Ratnam. "You never told me that you had any trouble! It doesn't matter, but does your friend at least know of it?" she added innocently.

"Who? Muneeswar?" Muthuraman lowered his voice to a whisper. "Of course, he knows about it. In fact, he is the cause, I should say, though he's not to be

blamed." He then went on giving her the details, assuring her that it was never his intention to cheat his friend. He only wanted some more time. "Last week, he was very angry and warned me that he would drag me to the magistrate if I didn't pay him this week. He'll come today and I don't know what I shall do or tell him!"

"Magistrate? Did he say he would take you to the magistrate?" Ratnam merely echoed what her husband had said, though she added, "He appears quite ungrateful! Suppose the magistrate sends you to the prison! Then, what shall I do? Where shall I go?" She was about to weep, but she did not wish to cry in front of her husband, so she ran to the kitchen.

Suddenly, a cock entered through the front door cawing aloud and as Muthuraman shooed him, he went out through the kitchen. "Ratnam, come here!" he called out to his wife.

Ratnam wiped her eyes and cheeks dry with one end of her sari and went up to him. She found that his face had brightened up. "I've a plan, but be quick about it, we've no time to

lose!" Muthuraman then whispered something into her ears.

By the time Ratnam prepared a paste of rice and potato, Muthuraman had opened up two pillows and spilt their contents on the floor. As soon as the paste was cool, Muthuraman smeared it all over his body, while she went on spreading the white cotton on the paste. No part of the body was missed, not even the face. "Now I'll go to the goat-pen and hide there," he said, as he carefully walked through the kitchen.

Sometime later, Ratnam heard a voice from the porch. "Muthu! Muthuraman! Are you in?" She arranged her sari as she went up to the door. "Good-morning, sister, isn't Muthu in?" asked Muneeswar.

"No, he's not at home today," Ratnam managed to reply as calmly as possible. "You see, he caught a strange bird in his farm, and he came to know that the king may be interested in buying it from him. So, he had gone to meet the king."

"Strange bird, did you say?" Muneeswar appeared not convinced. "Could I have a look at



it?"

"It's in its cage," said Ratnam. "I'm sorry, you can't see it. If the door is open and it flies away, then I'll be blamed!"

By now, his curiosity had got the better of him and Muneeswar moved to the courtyard at the back and began searching for the cage. There was no cage, only a goat-pen, but he did see something white moving inside. As nothing much was visible, he opened the gate of the pen, and out ran a huge bird, all white, with a loud shriek. Muneeswar stepped back for a while, in

surprise and fear, and when he took courage and peeped out, he found the bird had disappeared.

More than his disappointment, he was now shocked to find his friend's wife wailing aloud, and beating her chest. "How shall I answer my husband! Where can I go and find the bird!"

"Hush! Don't cry, sister!" Muneeswar tried to pacify her, unsuccessfully.

"My husband will be angry with me!" cried the woman. "More than that, the king will be angry with my husband! He may put him in prison! Why, he may even behead my husband!"

"Sister, please don't tell the king that I let the bird out!" pleaded Muneeswar. "I shall compensate my friend. Tell him that he can forget the money he had taken from me. Here's a

thousand rupees more. Let Muthu find some excuse to tell the king. I don't want to be imprisoned, and I don't wish to die!" Muneeswar then counted a thousand rupees and gave it to Ratnam, who took it with a show of hesitancy.

Muneeswar left the place in a hurry. His exit was being watched by Muthuraman with a glee, which nobody would have noticed through his strange make-up. He first washed himself clean before he entered his house. What greeted him was the smiling face of his wife. "See that! Here's a thousand rupees for you to forget the loan of the thousand you had borrowed from your friend!"

"You seem to be cleverer than I!" remarked Muthuraman. "Together we can outsmart everybody else!"





Productive Today— Destructive Tomorrow

Someone said, "Nature is wonderful! A million years ago, she didn't know we were going to wear spectacles, yet look at the way she placed our ears!"

That is a humorous way of saying, Nature has made us with great care. It has taken biology and medical science thousands of years to understand how our body functions, how our heart beats, how our blood circulates, how our cells die and grow, etc., etc.

But no sensible biologist or scientist will claim today that he had known everything about our body. From time to time we come across astounding new laws about our body system.

When we do not know everything about as infinite an object as our body and its functions, can we say we have known everything about the earth and its functions?

That is why, the safest thing for man is not to disturb the basic structure of the hills or the rivers. We may change the course of a river for our immediate gain today, but we never know what harm our action will cause after a hundred years. We do not know all the laws of Nature, how she balances herself with the help of her own river system and ranges of hills.

We must conquer our temptation to be productive today at the cost of Nature. Our action may prove destructive tomorrow.



WANTED: A CROWD!

Wrestler Baroma had become quite famous after he won several bouts. One look at him, and people were awe-struck by his figure and physique. The village chief who was searching for a watchman for the local temple chose Baroma for that job.

One night, the temple was burgled of the day's collection and some silver vessels used for the daily *pujas*.

The village chief was angry with Baroma. "Didn't you see the thieves entering the temple and taking away the valuables? Why didn't you catch them? You never fail to defeat your opponents in wrestling bouts. If so, what happened to you last night?"

"I would have grappled with them, sir," said Baroma nonchalantly. "But there was nobody present to cheer me. In bouts, success comes to me because the watchers always cheer me and then I feel encouraged and enthused."

The village chief was stumped. "I was a fool to have chosen you for the watchman's job!" He asked Baroma to look for a job elsewhere.





LET US KNOW

What is an albino?

— Chitra Iyer, Bombay

An albino is an animal or human being who suffers from a hereditary absence of pigment in the skin and hair, which remain white, and whose eyes are pink or a very pale blue and are unduly sensitive to light. The word is derived from the Latin *Albus*, meaning white. This condition is also seen in plants, though rarely.

Who was the Indian girl who spied for the Allies in France and was killed after her capture by the Germans?

— Biranchi Narayan Behera, Balasore

Mata Hari, sounding very much like an Indian, was Gertrud Margarete Zelle, of Dutch origin. She was a professional dancer in France and was enlisted as a spy for that country during World War I. She was reported to have become a 'double agent', working as a spy for Germany, too. When this was discovered, she was shot dead by the French in 1917.

What is meant by imperialism? How did it begin?

— Nandita and Pavithra, Bangalore

History tells us of kings who annexed other countries and enlarged their kingdoms to create empires; and they came to be known as emperors. The word *imperialism* has its origin in emperors and emperors though it has a modern connotation—to mean the attempt by one country to dominate others by direct rule. Such countries were known as colonies. India was once a colony of 'Great' Britain, which began conquering or colonizing various territories from the 17th century. By the end of World War I, the British empire was the largest with more than 25 per cent of world's population and area under its rule. Political imperialism is almost wiped out from the world. Instead, we have what is called *neo-colonialism*, whereby one country exercises economic control over others.



Vacation time is here again
Time to put text books away
So we've come together to say
Have fun and 'Happy Holidays'!





It's holiday time again!

Time to put those text books
away. Time for cricket. And
ice-creams. And milkshakes.

Time for fun the whole day thru'!



From Coon, Wobbit, Teddy and all the rest
of us here at Chandamama, have a great time.

We wish we could spend your holidays with you.



CHANDAMAMA



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Natarajan



M. Natarajan

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

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The winning entry : "AMAZEMENT" — "AMUSEMENT"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

One always weakens everything which one exaggerates.

—La Harpe

The outcome gives to deeds their title.

—Goethe

Do your deed and know yourself.

—Montaigne



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